DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 285	CE 080 055
AUTHOR	Hillage, J.; Uden, T.; Aldridge, F.; Eccles, J.
TITLE	Adult Learning in England: A Review. IES Report 369.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester (England).; Sussex Univ., Brighton (England). Inst. for Employment Studies.
ISBN	ISBN-1-85184-299-3
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	135p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Grantham Book Services, Isaac Newton Way, Alma Park Industrial Estate, Grantham NG31 9SD, U.K. (25 pounds, plus 2 pounds post & packing).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Adult Programs; Basic Skills; College Programs; Educational History; *Educational Needs; *Educational Opportunities; Educational Planning; *Educational Trends; *Enrollment Trends; Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Lifelong Learning; Outcomes of Education; Participation; Policy Formation; Postsecondary Education; Program Administration; Program Development; Public Policy; Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

In England, adult education became widespread as industrialization fed the demand for popular democracy. A marked shift from practical to leisure-based adult education occurred after World War II. More recently, policymakers have acknowledged the broader aims of education, including social inclusion and creation of a learning society. More than 90% of adults in England consider learning very or fairly important. At any given time, one in seven adults are actively engaged in formal learning. The three main groups of obstacles deterring participation in adult learning are practical/material, structural, and attitudinal barriers. Recent skills audits in England highlight a deficit in basic and intermediate skills among adults. A range of measures to broaden the social profile of people participating in adult, further, and higher education have been introduced or proposed in recent years. The measures range from targeting certain groups to making fundamental changes in funding methods. Although the positive relationship between education level and financial rewards is clear at the individual level, the returns of education are more difficult to identify at the organizational level. (Eighteen tables/figures and a glossary are included. Contains a bibliography listing 147 references, a list of 24 useful Web sites, and an appendix containing additional data.) (MN)

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Adult Learning in England: a review

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NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION
FOR ADULT LEARNING

IES
Report 369

Published by:

Institute for Employment Studies
Mantell Building
Falmer
Brighton BN1 9RF
UK

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Fax + 44 (0) 1273 690430

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 1-85184-299-3

Printed in Great Britain by College Hill Press

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to Steve Leman and others in the Department for Education and Employment for their helpful advice and comments. Particular thanks go to Veronica McGivney at NIACE for her extremely helpful comments during the editing stage. The authors are also grateful to other colleagues (notably Alan Tuckett and Peter Lavender at NIACE and Jo Regan, Emma Hart and Andy Davidson at IES) for their advice and support with preparing the review. Any errors or omissions remain the full responsibility of the authors and any views expressed should not be attributed to the DfEE.

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Summary

The OECD is conducting a Thematic Review of adult learning in a range of countries including England and is due to report in February 2001. The purpose of this background paper was to provide the OECD Review team with a summary of the state of adult learning in England in terms of participation, institutional arrangements and funding, the main issues facing policy-makers and the policies adopted. It provides a useful reference source on adult learning in England at the turn of the century.

Definitions

In England, an adult learner tends to mean anyone involved in education and training once they have completed their initial education. Learning policy tends to treat 'adults' as people aged 19 or over. An accepted definition of 'learning' is less clear. While it certainly includes formal education or training leading to a qualification, there is also a range of informal learning opportunities, some of which are significant sources of skill or knowledge development. The focus of policy is broadening to encompass informal as well as formal learning, and non-vocational as well as vocational learning. There has also been a move in policy circles away from focusing on 'useful' learning.

In this review, where possible, we have focused on data relating to adults aged 25 or over who had finished their initial education, to comply with the OECD definition of 'adult learning' rather than the main thrust of policy in England. We have also looked at all forms of learning, although some of the key data sources have a formal and vocational learning bias.

Main players

The main policy agency in the field is the **Department for Education and Employment**, formed in 1995 from a merger of previously separate education and employment ministries. Its remit encompasses initial education (up to the age of 16), lifelong learning (*ie* education and training beyond 16) and helping people without a job into work (*eg* through initiatives such as Work-Based Learning for Adults). There is a range of other official and non-governmental agencies with roles in adult learning. Key public agencies include:

- **Local Education Authorities (LEAs)** — part of local government and responsible for local adult education provision. There were over one million enrolments on adult education courses in 1998.
- **The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)** — responsible for provision of further education (other than higher education) to young people and adults. There were over 3.8 million students in further education in 1998.
- **Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs)** — independent companies funded by the DfEE to (among other things) ensure that employers' and workforces' training needs are met.

The latter two are to be replaced in 2001 by a combined **Learning and Skills Council**, responsible for all education and training of young people and adults (outside higher education), including the funding and promotion of adult education secured by LEAs.

The **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)** distributes teaching and research money to universities and to colleges for their higher education work. There were over half a million part-time students in higher education aged over 25 in the 1997/98 academic year.

Other important players include **employers**, **voluntary organisations**, such as the Workers' Educational Association and (increasingly) **trade unions**. Employers spend between £15 billion and £20 billion a year on training.

Development of adult learning in England

While the roots of adult education stretch back in religious education, widespread adult education developed in England as industrialisation fed the demand for popular democracy. Key landmarks included the development of the Mechanics' Institutes in the early 19th Century and the Workers' Educational Association and local adult education in the early 20th Century.

After World War II, there was a marked shift from practical to leisure-based learning, but adult education failed to attract those people who had benefited least from initial education. A series of measures sought to address this issue from the 1970s, including the Open University, which opened to students in 1971.

Since the early 1980s there has been growing recognition that the country cannot meet its skill needs solely by focusing on the preparation of young entrants to the labour force. Following the 1988 White Paper, *Employment in the 1990s*, TECs were established to provide a voice and influence for employer and business priorities in adult education and training provision.

Another important milestone was the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). This removed further education colleges from Local Authority control, established the FEFC and encouraged a more utilitarian curriculum. The Act was seen by some observers at the time as likely to extinguish part of the adult education tradition. However, it actually triggered a period of growth in adult participation, and greater interest in which segments of the population were or were not participating, further accelerated by the reports of the Kennedy and Tomlinson Committees.

Since May 1997, and the election of a new government, there has been an acknowledgement of the importance of social inclusion, civic and public life, and personal development and fulfilment as legitimate goals for education worthy of public support. A 'learning society' is now seen as a desirable social as well as an economic goal. The *Learning Age* consultation paper issued by the government in 1998 is seen by some commentators as a watershed in policy terms. Since then, there has been an even greater emphasis on widening participation in all forms of learning provision, including further and higher education.

Current policy

Currently, government spends £11 billion a year on Lifelong Learning (which includes all further and higher education provision covering young people as well as adults). Key elements of current policy relevant to this review include:

- efforts to maximise attainment, particularly in terms of basic literacy and numeracy, during initial education — with the long-term aim of minimising alienation from learning in later life
- an emphasis on basic skills training for adults (especially since the publication of the Moser report on literacy and numeracy in 1999)
- a commitment to develop new forms of learning provision, using modern technologies to improve the efficiency of developing learning materials, overcome problems of access and make learning available in more digestible units, as epitomised by **learndirect**
- engaging a wider range of intermediaries to support learning activities and participation, *eg* with government support for community learning activities and the involvement of trade unions
- a willingness to acknowledge and meet the additional costs to providers of attracting, recruiting and retaining non-traditional learners.

The new developments were outlined in the Learning and Skills Bill, published at the end of 1999.

Participation

The Labour Force Survey (LFS), which adopts a fairly short-term and vocational definition of learning, suggests that at any one time one in seven adults (aged 25 or over) is actively engaged in formal learning activity. Using a wider definition of learning, two in three people (aged 25 or over), according to the National Adult Learning Survey (NALS), either are or have recently (*ie* within the previous three years) been involved in some form of learning activity. The balance of evidence suggests that learning activity among adults is rising. However, participation is not uniform and varies by:

- **age**: learners tend to be younger than non-learners, although one recent study found that while participation in vocational learning declined as people approached retirement age, non-vocational learning remained constant.
- **gender**: the LFS indicates that more women than men are engaged in learning, while NALS and other surveys show the reverse. Detailed analysis of the NALS data indicate that gender is not a key predictive variable of people's participation in learning.
- **ethnicity**: similarly, ethnic origin does not appear to significantly affect learning behaviour.
- **labour market status**: those in work are far more likely than the unemployed or inactive to access or participate in formal or informal learning activity. Employees in larger firms are more likely to be trained than those in smaller ones. On balance, participation appears to vary little by hours worked or the nature of the employment contract.
- **previous educational experience**: the age at which people finish their formal initial education does appear to be very influential on their learning patterns in later life. For instance, the NALS data showed that non-learners were over twice as likely as non-learners to have left school without a qualification.
- **social class**: there is a clear correlation between a person's occupation and their levels of participation in learning activity. Across the surveys, those in managerial or professional occupations are far more likely to be classed as learners than those in manual (skilled or semi-skilled) occupations.
- **geography**: there are significant regional differences in the extent of adult participation in formal learning.

There is a clear divide between those who benefit from education and training and those who do not. Younger people, those with high levels of initial education, those in work (especially in higher level occupations) are far more likely to be engaged in learning than older people, those who leave school early and people in lower-skilled manual jobs. There are processes at work which can lead to a 'spiral of marginalisation', where those with poor educational backgrounds consequently enter lower level employment where they are less likely to receive training and thus progress.

Attitudes to learning

According to recent national surveys, most adults in England have a fairly positive attitude to learning. Over 90 per cent believe it to be very or fairly important and most (two-thirds) express a desire to learn (although fewer — 50 per cent) expect to actually take part in a learning activity in the near future. Motivations to learn are mainly vocational — to acquire work-related skills (often initiated by an employer), and generally for an existing rather than a future job. Other major motivations are intellectual (to acquire knowledge) and social — to meet and interact with others.

Barriers to learning

Three main groups of obstacles deter participation:

- practical or material barriers, including:
  - financial — the costs of learning both direct (fees) and indirect (transport, books, equipment)
  - lack of time — due to other commitments (work and family)
  - lack of good and affordable childcare
  - geographical isolation
  - lack of information, *eg* about local learning opportunities
- structural barriers, such as:
  - lack of appropriate education or training opportunities — either at work or in the community
  - age or qualification barriers — to entering an education or training programme
  - constraints of the benefit system — relating to the kind of learning people can do while on benefit, and the time they can spend on learning without losing welfare benefits (the 16-hour rule)
- attitudinal barriers, for example:
  - negative attitudes to learning — arising from poor school experiences
  - lack of confidence in one's ability to learn — fear of failure
  - perception that one is too old to learn
  - lack of motivation — seeing no reason to learn.

Learning needs

Recent skills audits in England highlight a deficit in basic and intermediate skills among adults. One in five adults have low levels of literacy and almost half have low levels of numeracy. Employers also report deficits in key skills which embrace: communication skills; the application of number; information technology; working with others; improving own learning and performance; and problem solving. Other adult learning needs highlighted in current policy include learning for citizenship, for community regeneration and capacity building, and for parenting and family learning.

Teaching adult learners

Learning providers are attempting to respond to current demands for wider participation which means that teachers must cater for an increasing range of needs and abilities, not only within education and training institutions, but often within individual classes. While most (but not all) adult trainers and educators are trained, a recent Further Education Inspectorate report concluded that training was not adequate to help many teachers deal effectively with the wide range of abilities and differing learning needs they faced, especially in teaching of basic skills.

Just as those involved in teaching and supporting adult learners are having to change to accommodate wider participation, so are other elements of the infrastructure, including funding mechanisms to reflect the higher cost of provision for the previously excluded.

Widening participation

A range of measures to widen the social profile of people participating in adult, further and higher education have been introduced or proposed in recent years, from specific measures targeting certain groups, to more fundamental changes to funding regimes.

Returns to learning

At an **individual level**, there is clear evidence of the benefits of a relationship between education level and financial rewards. For instance, men (aged between 40 and 49) with a degree earn, on average, 60 per cent more than average earnings, while men without any qualification earn 40 per cent less than average. Some studies also suggest that people who receive training gain between five and 15 per cent in pay, compared with those who receive no training. Involvement in learning initiatives among the unemployed (such as Training for Work) have been demonstrated to improve their chances of employment.

The **wider benefits** of learning at an individual level include improved self-esteem and self-confidence. There are also studies which show a relationship between health and well-being and involvement in learning activities.

At an **organisational level**, the returns are less easy to identify, although there are a number of research studies which demonstrate a link between investment in training and improved productivity, and also between business success and involvement in the Investors in People standard for training and development.

At a **family and community level**, despite lack of in-depth and longitudinal evidence, there are signs that adult engagement in learning can have a significant and positive impact on families (especially children at school) and the wider community through a peer group and role model effect.

Conclusion

This is a time of considerable flux in the field of adult learning in England as new structures and policies come on stream. However, there remain a number of challenges including:

- raising the demand for learning among those who need it most, but are interested in it least
- encouraging a culture of continuous learning and development at all levels, but particularly at the intermediate skills level, where the need is most pressing
- ensuring that new initiatives aimed at widening participation are not dominated by current learners
- ensuring that a concentration on qualifications does not distort funding and provision to the detriment of initially reluctant learners
- maintaining a commitment to social inclusion and the wider purposes of learning in the face of institutional inertia and conservatism
- ensuring that the lifelong learning agenda does not concentrate disproportionately on 16 to 19 year olds, but includes people of all ages, including the growing numbers of those aged over 60.

1. Introduction

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is conducting a cross-country Thematic Review to look at participation in and policy approaches to adult learning and is due to report in 2001. The aim is to review whether the quality and quantity of learning opportunities for adults are adequate, and how to improve access to adult learning.

The Review is based around visits by an OECD team to a range of countries where they will collect evidence from a range of policy-makers, practitioners and commentators. England is one of the participating countries and the visit took place in February 2000. As part of the preparation for the visit, each country was asked to write a Background Report, summarising the state of adult learning in the country concerned in terms of participation, institutional arrangements and funding, the main issues facing policy-makers, and the policies they have adopted or contemplating. It provides a useful reference source on adult learning in England at the turn of the century.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) asked the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to prepare the Background Report, presented here. The report examines:

- the main institutional and policy framework surrounding adult learning (Chapter 2)
- recent trends and the current state of play on participation in adult learning (Chapter 3)
- the state of understanding on the motivation of adult learners (Chapter 4)
- adults' learning needs and the training of adult learning providers (Chapter 5)
- recent moves to widen adult participation in learning activities (Chapter 6)
- the returns and benefits of participation in learning and the development of learning policies (Chapter 7), and
- the authors' conclusions on the current policy framework towards adult learning (Chapter 8).

At the outset, it may be useful to set out key assumptions underpinning the report.

- Policy towards adult learning is developing at a fast pace in England. The situation described in this report is as it was at 31 December 1999. Although some of the planned changes are referred to, it is important to recognise that a new policy framework is being developed and implemented during the timeframe of the review.
- The structure of this Background Report follows, as far as is practicable, the structure set out in the OECD's guidance. However, in places the structure has been adapted to reflect the English context, take account of data availability, and to avoid repetition. The data appended are also intended to meet the precise requirements.
- Any views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the DfEE. The authors take full responsibility for any errors and omissions.

2. Background

In this Chapter we set the scene for the report by reviewing the definition of adult learning in England, briefly outlining the history of policy development in the area, identifying the main agencies involved, and summarising government policy and the main policy instruments.

2.1 Scope and definition of adult learning

There are two main issues involved in defining adult learning:

- who constitutes an adult in the English context, and
- what counts as 'learning'.

We begin by defining the term 'adult' before reviewing the debate about the term 'learning' and what it involves. Our discussion is framed by two parameters:

- the available statistical sources — on which much of the subsequent chapters are based. The definitions used by quantitative and qualitative research for 'adults' and for 'learning' obviously influence what is known about adult learning in England.
- the policy context and the institutional framework within which policy is turned into practice — which to an extent determines the questions asked and answered by the research we have reviewed.

Details of the definitions used by the surveys and other research on adult participation in learning are discussed in Chapter 2; in this Chapter we concentrate on the policy and theoretical debate.

2.1.1 Adults in the learning context

Compulsory full-time education in England finishes at the age of 16 — or at least at the end of the academic year in which someone becomes 16 — usually with people taking General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Thereafter, in one sense, people are treated as adults. They have finished their 'schooling', and their further participation in formal or informal education is usually voluntary, unless they are required to undertake training related to their employment. Young people are able to be State-funded in full-time further education or training (of their choice) for a further three years, until they are 19, currently through one of three routes:

- **the academic route**, by pursuing general educational qualifications, *eg* GCE 'A' level (General Certificate of Education Advanced level); and (from Autumn 2000) a new range of 'AS' (Advanced Subsidiary) examinations
- **a vocational route** in the workplace through National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) made up of a number of units which set out industry-defined standards of occupational competence. These describe the skills and knowledge people need to be able to perform effectively at work.
- **a mixed route**, via General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which combine general and vocational education. GNVQs provide a path into both education and employment. They are broadly based vocational qualifications incorporating the skills required by employers, and are designed to develop the skills and understanding needed in vocational areas such as business, engineering or health and social care. They are normally studied in school or college.

There are five 'levels' of qualification, based on the NVQs. The way the three systems relate to each other is set out in Table 2.1.

Where possible, we have adopted the OECD definition of adults (*ie adults over the age of 25 out of the initial education and training system*), but it is important to recognise at the outset that this is not a distinction made in English education, training or learning policy. What makes an 'adult learner' in England is theoretically anyone, of whatever age, who returns to learning after completing their initial education. However, 'adult learning' in England is more usually taken to refer to anyone over the age of 19 engaged in learning activities.

Since initial education may end as early as 16, some young adults could have been out of full-time education for nine years

Table 2.1: Relationship between the three post-16 qualifications options in England

Level	NVQs	GNVQs	General Education
NVQ 5	Professional	n/a	Higher education
NVQ 4	Higher technician, management	n/a	Higher education
NVQ 3	Advanced craft, technician, supervisor	Advanced	2 GCE 'A' levels
NVQ 2	Basic craft	Intermediate	4 GCSEs A to C
NVQ 1	Foundation	Foundation	4 GCSEs D to G

Source: IES, NIACE, 2000

Table 2.2: Participation in post-compulsory education and training: England (per cent)

Year	16 year olds		17 year olds		18 year olds	
	All education and training*	Government supported education and training**	All education and training*	Government supported education and training**	All education and training*	Government supported education and training**
1991	83.1	76.6	71.8	65.3	45.0	39.9
1998	84.8	77.4	77.3	68.5	60.9	53.7

** Total in full-time education and government supported training (GST), plus employer funded training and other education and training*

*** Total full-time and part-time education in publicly funded institutions and GST*

Source: Education and Training Statistics for the UK, 1998

before they would be picked up by a 25+ definition. While the numbers staying on in full-time, State-supported education is increasing (see Table 2.2), by the age of 19, almost four in ten people are outside the formal education system.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the official 'retirement age' (*ie* when the State pension becomes payable) in England is 65 for men and 60 for women. However, education policy, outside the sphere of the labour market, again focuses on adults of all ages.

2.1.2 Definitions of learning

Any ambiguity over the term 'adult' is minor compared with debate the around what constitutes 'learning'.

Learning is a complex phenomenon. It can be seen as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, and to an extent behavioural traits and attitudes. Learning is different to 'education' or 'training' which can be seen as processes within which learning may, or indeed may not, take place. Learning is the outcome, while education or training a formal input. People undergoing training and education could be seen as 'throughputs' and any qualifications or other attainments they achieve as 'outputs'. It is much easier to monitor the throughputs and outputs of the process rather than the actual outcomes — *ie* what people have learnt and the difference it makes to them.

Formal and informal learning

The nature of learning can be unpacked in a number of ways. Useful distinctions in adult education literature have been made between:

- *formal* — learning undertaken within formal educational institutions
- *non-formal* — organised, systematic learning carried on outside the framework of the formal system

- *informal* — learning that occurs frequently in the process of daily living, sometimes coincidentally, although it can be accredited through systems of recognition of prior experiential learning (APEL), and some of its outcomes can be evaluated.

McGivney (1999, pp. 1-2) used as an operational definition of informal learning:

> *'learning that takes place outside a dedicated learning environment, which arises from the activities and interests of individuals or groups but which may not be recognised as learning ....'*

These three definitions are naturally open to question, although the first two are relatively uncontested.

For our purposes, there is currently a particular interest in informal learning, for several reasons, notably:

- the growing interest in policy circles in developing less formal learning opportunities as a way of encouraging people alienated through school or other learning experiences to engage in learning activities
- recognition of the important role informal learning can play in contributing to community development and regeneration and combating social exclusion.

The definition adopted by the DfEE for the National Target for promoting participation in learning among adults (2.2.9) is that it is deliberate and can involve either formal, taught learning, or informal, non-taught learning.

However, it is difficult to estimate the amount and scale of informal learning undertaken by adults, as it is frequently not recognised as learning and therefore not reported in surveys:

> *'Estimates of participation levels depend heavily on the definition of "learning" that is used. Formal episodes of learning such as degree courses, attendance at training colleges, formal training courses organised by the employer at work and so on tend to be immediately identified by survey respondents as learning activities, but they are less clear about including informal, unstructured types of learning. This is particularly true of some learning at work that is seen as "just part of the job". It is also true of some types of non-vocational learning because the purpose of the activity is seen as fun rather than learning. This raises the fundamental question of what constitutes learning and whether it can be clearly differentiated from such things as experience and leisure.'* (Edwards *et al.*, 1998)

Recent survey definitions

The 1997 National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) (Beinart and Smith, 1997) attempted to capture information about self-directed learning in a way that was intelligible to survey respondents, but without making their definition so broad as to:

> *'include such a wide range of human experience as to render our definition nearly meaningless.'*

The survey therefore identified ten different forms of learning under two headings:

Taught learning which included:

- any taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- any taught courses designed to help develop skills that might be used in a job
- any courses, instruction or tuition in driving, playing a musical instrument, in an art or craft, in a sport, or any practical skill
- evening classes
- learning which has involved working on one's own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation, or other training provider
- any other taught course, instruction or tuition.

Non-taught learning which included:

- studying for qualifications without taking part in a course
- supervised training while actually doing a job (*ie* when a manager or experienced colleague has spent time with helping an individual to learn or develop skills as they do specific tasks at work)
- time spent keeping up-to-date with developments in the type of work done without taking part in a taught course — for example by reading books, manuals or journals or attending seminars
- deliberately trying to improve one's knowledge about anything or teaching oneself a skill without taking part in a taught course.

Vocational and non-vocational learning

Turning from definitions of learning to its purpose, a distinction is often drawn between learning relating to a job or occupation (*ie* vocational learning) and that undertaken for intellectual, social or other reasons. There is an ongoing debate around what constitutes 'useful' or 'relevant' learning, especially when questions about what kinds of learning merit or do not merit public or employer financial support are posed. The concept of 'useful' learning was prominent in government policies during the 1990s, as reflected in the 1991 White Paper, *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES and ED, 1991), which proposed the withdrawal of public funding for all but 'useful' learning. Though not carried forward in its entirety into the subsequent Further and Higher Education Act (1992), this instrumental approach provoked much discussion over the long-term and short-term utility of the outcomes from learning. As well as fundamentally altering adult education funding and differentiating between the kinds of adult learning that would be eligible for public funding, it also shaped some of the institutions and organisations outlined in section 2.2 below.

The current government has taken a broader view of what constitutes valuable learning :

> *'As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfil our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings.'*
>
> (Preface to *The Learning Age*, DfEE, 1998i)

This new and more comprehensive view of the usefulness of different kinds of learning is leading to a re-shaping, and even the disappearance, of some of the current institutions and organisations. There is still nevertheless a strong instrumental thrust in current policy, based on the notion of usefulness and enhancing ones 'employability'.

The definition adopted by the DfEE for the National Target (2.2.9) for promoting participation in learning among adults is that it is *deliberate* and can involve *either* formal, taught learning or informal, non-taught learning.

2.2 The players

In this section we briefly outline the main agencies currently involved in developing policy and promoting practice on adult learning in England. It is necessarily a 'snapshot', taken in December 1999, at the very moment that government was proposing radical change. The likely consequences of the government's Learning and Skills Bill (published 16 December 1999) for some of the major players are mentioned in this section. The broader policy implications of the Bill are outlined in Section 2.4.2.

2.2.1 The Department for Education and Employment

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) was formed in 1995 from a merger of the former Department for Education (DfE) and Employment Department (DE).

In the context of this background report and the changes of direction and emphasis evident in government policies since 1997 outlined in it, it is useful to set out the ways in which this government department now sees its role. In the publication *Learning and Working Together for the Future* (DfEE, 1998n), the Department analyses briefly the context of globalisation, economic and technical change *etc.* in which it operates, and goes on to say:

> *'Together these trends pose **two major challenges**: to create a society that is inclusive and an economy which can compete in the global market place.*
>
> *'Learning is of particular importance to the socially excluded, who suffer from some or all of a lack of skills, no work, low self-esteem, low expectations, fragmented communities, poor housing, crime, ill-health and drugs; problems which have often persisted for several generations. The challenge for DfEE is to re-engage individuals in developing their skills — to reduce the numbers of children excluded from school or playing truant; raise achievement in schools so that young people continue in education and training; encourage young people or adults who were failed by their schools to get back into learning; help those without jobs to find ways back into work; and promote equality of opportunity and outcome for people across all sections of society.*
>
> *'An internationally competitive economy requires firms that are agile, with the skills and enterprise to create and sustain competitive advantage. This means Government fostering an environment that supports and stimulates that agility — through economic policies that provide stability, not boom and bust, and that can handle external shocks. The challenge for DfEE is to work with employers and education and training providers to ensure that young people and adults are equipped for tomorrow — with the skills, attitudes and personal qualities that will match the changing jobs, and are able to enhance and update their skills as requirements intensify.*
>
> *'Meeting these challenges demands joined-up Government — close collaboration with the Government Offices in the regions, the Social Exclusion Unit and Departments such as the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Social Security, the Treasury, Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, Department of Health and the Home Office. It also demands active Government support for strong local partnerships that will knit together national policies and programmes to deliver results on the ground.'*
>
> *'In the light of these two challenges, DfEE has revised its Departmental aim as follows:*
>
> - *To give everyone the chance, through education, training and work, to realise their full potential, and thus build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy.*
>
> *'To support this aim the DfEE has also set itself three specific objectives:*
>
> 1. *To ensure that all young people reach 16 with the skills, attitudes and personal qualities that will give them a secure foundation for lifelong learning, work and citizenship in a rapidly changing world.*
> 2. *To develop in everyone a commitment to lifelong learning, so as to enhance their lives, improve their employability in a*

changing labour market and create the skills that our economy and employers need.

The basis for lifelong learning — enthusiasm for self-development — has to be laid in schools, with careers education helping individuals to make the link between self-development and achievement and all young people encouraged to continue in education or training after 16, complete their courses and achieve further qualifications. But to establish the habit of lifelong learning amongst adults we have to:

- *encourage broader programmes of education and training for 16-19 year olds, including the development of key skills;*
- *have active policies to persuade those whose schooling was not a success to re-engage in learning;*
- *encourage individuals to invest in their own development;*
- *offer them better information, advice and guidance throughout life about the skills that will increase their employability;*
- *make learning more accessible;*
- *have credible qualifications that allow them to demonstrate their growing skills;*
- *promote high quality and standards in universities and colleges;*
- *get those providing education and training to be more responsive to individual needs, and to widen access;*
- *persuade employers to invest in the skills of all those they employ.*

3. *To help people without a job into work.'*

(DfEE, 1998n)

(Under which heading (3) the DfEE include education and training to build the skills that will enable individuals to keep the jobs they get.)

2.2.2 Employment Service

The Employment Service (ES) is an Agency of the DfEE which aims to help all people without a job to find work, and employers to fill their vacancies. In particular it helps people into work by providing appropriate advice, guidance, training and support, either directly or in partnership with others. It is responsible for the New Deal welfare to work programme for unemployed people (see 2.4.4.).

2.2.3 Government Offices for the Regions

In 1994, regional Government Offices were set up to bring together the regional operations of a number of government Departments (of which the DfEE is one) throughout nine

Regions[1]: to manage programmes on behalf of parent Departments; to support and facilitate effective linkages between partners and programmes; and to inform the development of Departments' policies from a regional perspective. The aim was to achieve a more coherent, integrated, partnership based response to regional issues. The Government Offices' role remains:

> *'to work in partnership with local people to maximise the competitiveness, prosperity and quality of life of the Region, and to meet the six key objectives which the new Government confirmed in 1997:*
>
> - *Develop partnerships with and between local interests to promote and secure all our objectives.*
> - *Promote a coherent approach to competitiveness, sustainable development and regeneration using public and private resources and through the exercise of our statutory responsibilities.*
> - *Contribute local views and experience to the formation and implementation of Government policy.*
> - *Meet the operational requirements of Departments and Ministers.*
> - *Provide a single point of contact and delivering high quality services on Citizen's Charter principles.*
> - *Develop the skills of staff and methods of working to achieve these objectives and to demonstrate their success in doing so.'*
>
> (www.go-east.gov.uk)

In the region, Government Offices are responsible for managing relationships and contracts between TECs, Business Links, Career Service companies, Learning Partnerships and the education sector. The overall aims of the Government Offices in the education field are to increase participation in learning, increase motivation, and secure a sound skill base. In order to do this, the Offices work through a range of projects, contracts and networks.

Under the proposals in the new Learning and Skills Bill, Government Offices will work to ensure that local Learning and Skills Councils (2.4.2) complement and contribute to the programmes and policies of other Government Departments and key local agencies — including for example, the work of the Home Office with ex-offenders (2.2.26).

2.2.4 Local Education Authorities

Local education authorities (LEAs) are locally elected county, metropolitan district, borough or unitary councils in England and Wales, which have a statutory duty for the provision and organisation of public education services in their area. There are 150 LEAs in England which have responsibility to provide education for early years, pupils of school age, the youth service and adult education. Normally, adult education is run by a small section of the LEA. However, some councils choose to run adult provision through a different department such as recreation or leisure, while about one-third secure the provision of adult education by contracting a third party (usually a further education college) to deliver it.

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[1] There were ten Government Offices originally.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 states that;

> *'It shall be the duty of every local education authority to secure the provision for their area of adequate facilities for further education.'*

This duty does not apply to further education covered under Schedule 2 of the 1992 Act, although LEAs were given the power to provide it if they chose.

2.2.5 Further Education Funding Council

Established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Further Education Funding Council for England (FEFC) secures further education facilities, other than higher education, for people who want to continue learning after leaving school. Its role is to secure throughout England sufficient and adequate facilities for further education to meet the needs of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from the communities in which they live. The FEFC distributes money given to it by Parliament to further education colleges, and their work also includes inspecting the standards of quality and achievement in the further education sector.

The Further and Higher Education Act (1992) states that:

> *'It should be the duty of each Council to secure the provision for the population of their area of* adequate *facilities for education to which this subsection applies, that is:*
>
> *(a) part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons of any age over compulsory school age, and*
>
> *(b) full-time education suitable to the requirements of persons who have attained the age of nineteen years,*
>
> *where the education is provided by means of a course of a description mentioned in Schedule 2 in this Act.'*

There are five types of FE College in England:

- agriculture and horticulture colleges
- art, design and performing arts colleges
- general further education colleges and tertiary colleges
- sixth form colleges
- specialist designated institutions.

Altogether, the sector is made up of 430 colleges. There are also 52 higher education institutions that deliver further education programmes and 235 other institutions, mainly local authority adult education centres, which also receive funding from the FEFC. Colleges vary in size: 25 per cent have up to 2,000 students whilst 24 per cent have more than 10,000.

Under the proposals in the new Learning and Skills Bill (2.4.2), the functions of the FEFC will be subsumed in the work of the Learning and Skills Council.

2.2.6 Training and Enterprise Councils

Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) are independent companies set up in England and Wales to organise training at local level. In England, some TECs have merged with their local Chambers of Commerce and are known as Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs). There are 72 TECs and 16 CCTEs in England and a TEC National Council which acts as a representative body. The DfEE negotiates and monitors contracts with the TECs and CCTEs in England for the local provision of government-funded training schemes. TECs vary in their organisation and services, depending on the needs of the local area. Their role is to assess local requirements and, within the limits of the resources available to them, ensure that the training and enterprise needs of local employers and workforces are met. TECs may contract with further education institutions for the provision of training as part of government-funded training schemes or other training initiatives. All FEFC sector institutions must have a representative from their local TEC on their governing body. They must also consult with the TEC when drawing up their strategic plans.

Under the proposals in the new Learning and Skills Bill, the education and training functions of TECs will be subsumed in the work of local Learning and Skills Councils.

2.2.7 Higher Education Funding Council for England

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributes public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges. Its mission statement describes itself:

> *'Working in partnership, we promote and fund high-quality, cost-effective teaching and research, meeting the diverse needs of students, the economy and society.'*

In 1999-2000 HEFCE plans to distribute £4.2 billion of public money for teaching, research and related activities in higher education in 402 institutions for 921,700 students.

The Higher Education sector is made up of 71 universities, 16 colleges of the University of London, 47 higher education colleges, and higher education courses in 268 FE colleges.

2.2.8 Regional Development Agencies

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were formally launched in eight English regions on 1 April 1999. The ninth, in London, will follow in 2000. They will provide effective, properly co-ordinated regional economic development and regeneration, and will enable the English regions to improve their relative competitiveness.

RDAs have the following statutory interests:

- economic development and regeneration
- business support, investment and competitiveness
- skills, training and employment
- sustainable development.

Agencies' specific functions are:

- formulating a regional strategy in relation to their purposes
- regional regeneration
- taking forward the government's competitiveness agenda in the regions
- taking the lead on regional inward investment
- developing a regional Skills Action Plan to ensure that skills training matches the needs of the labour market
- a leading role on European funding.

In the education and training field, RDAs are charged to improve the skills base of the region, including developing a regional skills agenda, and to enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment in their area. Under the proposals in the new Learning and Skills Bill, their Regional Economic Strategies will provide a framework for identifying skills needs in the regions.

2.2.9 National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets

The National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) is an employer-led body sponsored by the DfEE. It is comprised of a chair and 12 Council members, all of whom are prominent in business or education. The responsibilities of the Council are to monitor progress towards the National Targets for Education and Training and to advise government on performance and policies which will influence them. The National Targets for Education and Training set standards of achievement in education and training as a focus for the nation's efforts to secure the skilled workforce needed to maintain and improve our competitive position. The Council also has a remit to provide business leadership in raising skill levels and increasing employer commitment to the Targets. In 1998 the government adopted the Council's recommendations for revised targets for education and training to be achieved by 2002. From 2001 there will be an effective transfer of NACETT's national learning target responsibilities to the Learning and Skills Council.

2.2.10 Basic Skills Agency

The Basic Skills Agency (BSA) is the national development agency for literacy, numeracy and related basic skills work in England and Wales. The Agency aims to:

- promote the importance, and increase knowledge of basic skills
- initiate and support the development of basic skills provision
- improve the effectiveness of basic skills programmes and teaching.

These aims are achieved through a range of activities, including: advice and consultancy; funding of local development work; awarding quality marks for basic skills; producing and publishing teaching and learning materials; conferences and exhibitions; producing a range of leaflets and posters; commissioning research and surveys. The Agency is concerned with basic skills issues across the age range and has developed close links with colleges, adult and community organisations, schools and local education authorities, as well as with non-education providers such as private and public sector companies, housing and health agencies, trade unions *etc.*

2.2.11 National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the national membership organisation for adult learning in England and Wales. Its membership includes all LEAs, 134 further education providers, 47 higher education providers, professional and national organisations, adult and community education providers, voluntary organisations, TECs, arts organisations and awarding bodies.

The main aim of the Institute is to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education by: improving the quality of opportunities available; increasing the number of adults engaged in formal learning; and widening access for those communities under-represented in current provision. NIACE works with all the many interests active in the education and training of adults and:

- undertakes advocacy and policy work with national, regional and local agencies

- provides information, advice and guidance to organisations and individuals
- carries out research and development projects; organises conferences and seminars
- publishes journals, books and directories, and
- co-ordinates a major national promotion of education and training for adults through Adults' Learners Week.

2.2.12 Further Education Development Agency

The Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) is an independent organisation established in April 1995 to provide services to further education which promote quality, lead curriculum design and development, and enhance effective governance and management. FEDA:

- funds and manages research and development projects that draw on the experience of the FE system
- contributes to the national debate on post-16 by its membership of national and regional steering groups, advisory committees and working parties, and
- provides training, consultancy, guidance, advice and information to institutions in the field. The Agency's remit includes sixth form colleges and adult learners.

2.2.13 The Campaign for Learning

The Campaign for Learning is a national charity, working to create an appetite for learning in individuals that will sustain them throughout their lives. It was created with the sole purpose of championing the cause for lifelong learning. The Campaign operates as a partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, all dedicated to developing a learning society. It has attracted a range of support from the government, national bodies, national and regional media, schools, universities and other training providers, as well as community groups and individuals. Key national awareness days organised by the Campaign for Learning include Family Learning Weekend and Learning at Work Day.

2.2.14 National Training Organisations

National Training Organisations (NTOs) work at a strategic level with their sectors and with government across education and training throughout the whole of Great Britain. They help government extend and improve its dialogue with employers to ensure that the needs of business are taken fully into account in developing policy. The 70-strong NTO Network replaced Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), Lead Bodies (LBs) and Occupational Standard Councils (OSCs). NTOs draw together wider employment interests, including professional bodies, education, trade unions and trade associations. Their outputs include National Occupational Standards and Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks.

NTOs aim to:

- identify skill shortages and the training needs of the whole of their sector
- influence education and careers guidance provision
- develop occupational standards and NVQs/SVQs and advise on the national qualifications structure
- influence and advise on training arrangements and training solutions
- communicate and network with their employer base and key partners to implement strategies.

Two NTOs are of particular interest:

Further Education National Training Organisation

The Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) aims to raise the standards of teaching and learning, governance and management of education and training in further education. The organisation's key strategic aims are to:

- establish itself as a financially viable organisation, recognised as the authoritative voice on national occupational standards, competencies, professional development and qualifications for all staff in the FE sector
- develop a strategic capability for identifying the skill shortage and training needs of college staff and governors
- help improve colleges' effectiveness and their contribution to local, regional and national lifelong learning and competitiveness
- help ensure that all college staff and governors are adequately trained and appropriately qualified
- influence the provision of education, training, careers guidance and qualifications for all college staff
- build effective communications and partnerships.

The Employment National Training Organisation

The Employment NTO was formed by a merger in September 1997 of the Employment Occupational Standards Council with the Occupational Health and Safety Lead Board. Members are drawn from a wide range of occupations and industries, and represent employers, trade unions, and local and national government. The purpose of the Employment NTO is the enhancement and the improvement of the performance of people involved in the development, management, health and safety and representation of people in the workplace.

The Employment NTO sees its objectives as:

- representing the employment area
- developing national, sectoral and local partnerships on wider education and training issues
- promoting employer investment in people as central to competitive business performance
- helping to assess and respond to the education, training and development needs of the employment area
- placing a greater emphasis on the take-up and implementation of the Employment NTO's vocational standards and qualifications.

2.2.15 The Careers Service

The purpose of the Careers Service is to contribute to the learning and prosperity of individuals, their communities, and society as a whole. It does this by providing impartial information, guidance and help to enable people to enter appropriate education, training or employment. In doing so it must promote equality of opportunity and raise aspirations. There are 66 local careers service companies who are under contract to the DfEE to provide the Careers Service in England. They are required to be active with careers teachers/advisers in schools and colleges, and with other partners in planning, developing and delivering high quality careers information and programmes of careers education and guidance. In order to do this they must develop and utilise knowledge of local and national opportunities, and of trends in the economy, learning and the labour market.

2.2.16 University for Industry (Ufi)

Ufi is a new initiative to provide a national on-line and distributed learning network. It will be fully operational by Autumn 2000 and will use the customer facing brand of **learndirect**. Ufi will have two strategic objectives to:

- stimulate demand for lifelong learning amongst businesses and individuals
- promote the availability of, and improve access to, relevant, high quality and innovative learning, in particular through the use of information and communications technologies.

Using modern digital technologies, the Ufi will broker high quality learning products/services and make them available at home, in the workplace and in a network of **learndirect** centres countrywide. It will aim to break down barriers to learning by making provision more flexible and accessible, by stimulating new markets to bring down costs, by offering clear, reliable information and advice, and by providing opportunities for people to learn at their own pace and in convenient locations. It will promote learning ranging from the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to specialised technological skills and business management.

2.2.17 Open University

The Open University (OU) was founded by Royal Charter in 1969 with the aim of providing educational opportunities for adults to study in their own homes and in their own time. It operates throughout the whole of the UK and across parts of Europe by sending its educational material to people in their own homes or places of work. Local assistance is given to students through 13 regional centres. The OU is the only university in the UK established to teach its students through supported open learning, and is Britain's largest single teaching institution with more than 200,000 people studying its courses in 1998. Since the OU was established, more than two million people, in 43 countries, have used it to gain access to higher education.

2.2.18 Residential colleges

There are six long-term residential colleges in England offering just over 400 residential places a year. Each college's mission reflects its own distinctive circumstances, but all the colleges have a commitment to learning for active citizenship and social change within a framework of high academic standards. The colleges have a commitment to widening participation to under-represented groups, particularly the educationally and economically disadvantaged who wish to change direction, either into higher education or employment. The colleges offer 'value added' programmes which provide opportunities for intensive learning using residence as an intrinsic part of the learning environment.

2.2.19 National Extension College

The National Extension College (NEC) is a non-profit-making educational trust, which has been dedicated to offering distance learning opportunities for more than 30 years. The College provides a range of services to adult learners and organisations, including: the design and publication of learning materials; the provision of distance learning courses for home-based students; tuition for London University degrees and the Institute of Linguist qualifications; co-ordination of a FlexiStudy Scheme in association with 100 national colleges, and CoNECt, which is a collaborative partnership with colleges, enabling them to offer distance learning courses. Courses and training materials cover such subjects as marketing, management, accounting, child care, counselling, GCSEs, 'A' levels and leisure interests. There are over 13,000 people currently studying on home study courses, and a database of over 7,000 customers of training materials is also held.

2.2.20 National Open College Network

The National Open College Network (NOCN) is a key awarding body in the UK. It offers awards to adult learners, and in particular to those people for whom more traditional qualifications are inaccessible or inappropriate. The National Open College Network (NOCN) is an independent organisation founded in 1987. It operates through 29 local Open College Networks (OCNs) based across the UK, and around 630,000 learner registrations were recorded on OCN courses during 1998/9. NOCN aims to develop and widen access to high quality and flexible education, training and learning in any context, particularly for learners who have benefited least from formal provision.

2.2.21 Association of British Correspondence Colleges (ABCC)

The Association of British Correspondence Colleges represents many of the major private correspondence colleges in the UK.

It aims to:

- provide information and advice on correspondence education in Britain
- ensure that its members provide a high standard of tuition and efficient service
- safeguard the interests of students taking correspondence courses
- co-operate with the Open and Distance Learning Quality Council (ODLQC) and other bodies concerned with further education, and
- enhance the prestige of correspondence education.

2.2.22 British Educational Communications and Technology Agency

From 1 April 1998, the National Council for Educational Technology became British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa). Its new remit is to ensure that technology supports the government's objectives to drive up standards, in particular to provide the professional expertise needed to support the future development of the National Grid for Learning (see 2.4.4 below). BECTa will also have a role in the further education sector's development of the use of ICT, in the identification of ICT opportunities for special educational needs, and in the evaluation of new technologies as they come on stream.

2.2.23 Institute of Personnel and Development

The Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) is the professional institute for all those specialising in the management and development of people. It has over 100,000 members drawn from organisations of every kind. Approximately 14,000 new adult learners enrol with the IPD each year to undertake learning and development at one of the 400 universities, colleges, commercial and open learning providers, which the IPD approves to run programmes leading to the Institute's awards. IPD provides a wide range of information, publications, networking opportunities to assist these adult learners in their studies, and enable them to support their organisations in meeting their objectives.

2.2.24 BBC Education

BBC Education supports lifelong learning from pre-school to retirement. Over 2,000 hours of television and radio programmes are broadcast each year, supported by fact sheets, helplines, books and videos, CD ROM and Internet pages. 'Education for Adults' television programmes are broadcast on BBC1 and BBC2. The main areas of output include work and training, information technology, foreign languages, relationships, citizens' rights, families, health, science and basic skills. Education radio programmes for adults are broadcast across the five BBC radio networks. Output covers a wide range of topics including health, science and technology, business, work and employment, literacy, creative writing and foreign languages.

2.2.25 Independent Television Commission

Since 1991, the Independent Television Commission (ITC) has been the public body responsible for licensing and regulating commercially funded television services provided in and from the UK. Education has ceased to be a mandatory requirement for Channel 3 (ITV) licensees, however all have committed themselves to providing some local education/social action programming. The terms of Channel 4's licence confirm its mandate to provide 'a suitable proportion of programmes of an educational nature', currently an average of seven hours per week, all supported by publications or other educational arrangements. Channel 4 is an active supporter of Adult Learners Week.

2.2.26 Home Office

England has a very large prison population compared with competitor countries (*ca* 65,000). Research by the Basic Skills Agency (BSA, 1994) shows extremely high levels of people with literacy and numeracy problems within the prison population, which has been linked with concentrations of social exclusion and recidivism. Offenders and ex-offenders have recently been given a higher priority, in government efforts to combat social exclusion and education services within prisons, and are becoming more integrated with mainstream educational developments.

Penal establishments are required to work towards the rehabilitation of prisoners and to provide opportunities for their development as responsible members of society. The prison education service plays a major role in this development, not only in arranging and managing formal learning opportunities, but also in securing a development climate by assisting all prisoners consciously to consider utilising the learning potential of all situations in which they take part.

2.2.27 Health Education Authority

Founded in 1987 as a special health authority, and largely funded by the UK government's Department of Health, the Health Education Authority (HEA) is England's lead body in health promotion, helping people to make sustainable improvements in health, and working to reduce health inequalities. The HEA:

- advises the government on health promotion strategy
- undertakes research within key areas of health promotion; maintaining a substantial knowledge base in the subject
- works with health professionals on practical projects designed to improve health, and
- communicates extensively with the public on health issues.

2.2.28 Employers

Employers are a major provider of training and learning opportunities. Most employers train their employees, although the pattern varies by size and the nature of training (see Section 3.3). Broadly speaking, there appears to be four prevailing types of employer in terms of their approach to training (Hillage, 1996):

- **Non-trainers** — employers who provide limited (if any) formal training for their employees. They rely heavily on experienced staff who have acquired their skills over many years of performing the tasks required of them, and recruiting new staff who already possess the required level of skill.
- ***Ad hoc* or informal trainers** — employers who provide formal training to meet specific needs, *eg* the introduction of a new process or technology, or to meet the needs of a new recruit, or at the behest of key employees. While some training may lead to a qualification, this would not be the norm. The rest of the training they provide is unplanned and informal, relying on *ad hoc* interventions by more experienced

employees. This group is characterised by a lack of formal systems (*eg* training plans, training evaluation *etc.*). Some of the training undertaken by this group may not be clearly related to business or employee needs.

- **Formal, systematic trainers** — these employers adopt a more formal, even strategic, approach to training and are likely to have training plans, systems for identifying training needs and for evaluating the training they provide. They provide a mix of off- and on-the-job training as required to meet the identified business needs. Line managers as well as specialist training managers are likely to be involved with all employees in identifying and meeting training needs.
- **Learning organisations** — this term is used to depict organisations that that provide their employees with a range formal training and educational opportunities (both vocational and non-vocational). They also recognise that skills are acquired through less formal means such as projects, coaching and mentoring, as well as distance learning techniques. However, they are distinctive not just in the range of learning opportunities they provide, but also in their purpose. Employees learn as much to meet future as for current needs, and as much for their own development as for the requirements of the business.

Obviously, not every employer neatly fits into one of the four typologies. Indeed, some will adopt different strategies for different groups of staff, treating, for example, their management or professional core differently to other staff. However, it is likely that most employers in England fit into one or other of the first two types. Fewer adopt the third approach, akin to those who have reached the Investors in People standard (see 2.4.4). Less than one-fifth of employees work in organisations that have attained Investors status. Fewer still fit the final learning organisation model, although a number of organisations of all sizes would claim to aspire towards it.

2.2.29 Trade Unions

The Trades Union Congress and individual trade unions have a long tradition of delivering their own members' education, and have long-standing partnerships with residential colleges, FE colleges and the WEA (see 2.2.31). Some have their own residential colleges for member training. The TUC delivers day release and short courses to some 30,000 union representatives annually. Individual union schemes like UNISON's Return to Learn and union/employer partnership schemes like the Ford EDAP reach many more. Union involvement on learning activity is growing through ESF funded projects such as the TUC's Learning Services and the DfEE sponsored Union Learning Fund and the development of workplace learning representatives.

2.2.30 Churches

Nationally, the Church of England's Board of Education works in close co-operation with the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the National Society for the Promotion of Religious Education to deliver Christian education. The Further and Higher Education Committee has a practical concern for students, and supports the work of chaplaincies and maintains links with the Church Colleges of Higher Education. In England, there are 11 Church of England colleges of higher education and 11 theological colleges. The Voluntary and Continuing Education Committees work includes the entire area of the involvement of the Church in voluntary education, and the continuity of lifelong learning is the basis of the work of the National Youth Office and Adult Education and Lay Training. Over the past few years, churches of all denominations nationwide have been running the Alpha Course designed to examine the foundations of the Christian faith. To date, over one million adults in nearly 7,000 churches have participated in the course.

2.2.31 Voluntary organisations

Voluntary groups and organisations are significant providers of education and training. Most voluntary organisations provide some sort of education and training, such as discussions, demonstrations, visits, learning from experience and from other members, which is relevant to their specific goals. However:

> *'it is impossible to estimate the exact amount of informal learning that goes on in community settings … , partly because of its sheer diversity and partly because it is often both a part and a product of ostensibly non-educational activities.'* (McGivney, 1999b)

Examples of voluntary organisations that provide learning opportunities include community-based groups for pre-school children and their parents, organisations for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, ethnic minority organisations, housing associations, local credit unions, and organisations focussed on particular concerns such as health or the environment.

Some voluntary organisations have adult education as their primary role:

Workers' Educational Association

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is a national voluntary organisation, formed in 1903, existing primarily to provide adults with access to organised learning, designed to develop their intellectual understanding, confidence and social and collective responsibility. The WEA is the largest voluntary provider of adult education in the United Kingdom, providing over 10,000 courses in 1998 for upwards of 140,000 students. It has over 650 local branches, meeting the education and training needs of more than 100,000 adults per year. The WEA has received financial support from Central Government for over 70 years, and since 1993 has been funded by the Further Education Funding Council as a specialist designated institution.

National Federation of Women's Institutes

The National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) is a non-party-political, non-sectarian voluntary organisation with 275,000 members. It provides a democratically controlled educational and social organisation for country-minded women, giving members the opportunity of working and learning to improve the quality of rural life and develop their own skills and talents. Educational activities include talks and demonstrations at monthly meetings, as well as more informal learning opportunities at and in between meetings. More than 500 courses are held each year at Denman College (its residential education centre), and a national team of travelling tutors teach groups around the country in numerous subjects, including arts, crafts, design, music history and singing. Classes are also organised by individual WIs across a wide range of subjects, from home economics and crafts to public speaking and sports.

2.3 The development of adult learning in England

2.3.1 Origins

Widespread adult education developed in England and the United Kingdom along with industrialisation and the growth of the demand for popular democracy, yet its roots stretch back in religious education to the beginnings of organised Christianity in the British Isles and, in secular education, to the Renaissance.

Nevertheless, it was the Industrial Revolution and the growing concentration of the population in towns, that extended the opportunity for ordinary working people to gain instruction 'in the principles of the arts they practise, and in the various branches of science and useful knowledge'. The Mechanics' Institutes were founded on these principles. They started in Glasgow and London in 1823 and spread rapidly across the United Kingdom, and to Australia. Like many later initiatives, the Institutes attracted radical manifestos and reformist practice, in the debate about what constituted really useful knowledge. The Christian Socialist Working Men's College was founded in 1854; Quaker-influenced adult schools followed later in the century, and with the rise of the new unionism, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA, see 2.2.31) was established in 1903.

Parallel initiatives to bring education to workers prompted the rise of university extramural provision. From 1919, following a key policy report, local government provided mass adult education opportunities for people to gain qualifications through 'night schools' or to keep fit, extend their creativity, and stretch tight budgets through a crafts and domestic skills curriculum.

From the 1920s, community schools, based on the Cambridge Village Colleges, involved adults and children in complementary studies on single sites. Together, the WEA, the universities, and local authorities offered a rich and varied menu of education for self-improvement. However, they also marked a clear separation of learning for pleasure from vocational education.

World War II offered the largest scale general education programme mounted by employers, when the Army's Bureau of Current Affairs offered compulsory adult education for soldiers to discuss the shape of the post-war world.

After World War II, there was a marked shift from practical to leisure-based learning. Increasing affluence led to a demand for languages and lifestyle courses, and rapid expansion of provision overall, but adult education was still failing to attract those people who had benefited least from initial education. A series of measures addressed this issue from the 1970s.

2.3.2 The 1970s and 1980s

During the 1970s and 1980s, developments to improve access for groups under-represented in education began to gather momentum. A number of radical community adult educators working in places such as Liverpool pioneered a model of student-centred, community-based programmes for working-class groups, designed to contribute to the process of social change. This period also saw the start of an expansion of adult learning opportunities for other 'excluded' groups. In 1975, a major campaign was launched to teach literacy and numeracy to the six million adults in the United Kingdom with basic skills needs. Just as the growth of libraries had a major impact on adult learning in the 19th century, broadcasting had a comparable impact in the 20th. It brought people access to information and the stimulus to learn, free at the point of use in their own homes. The literacy campaign was launched on prime-time television. The Open University, which opened to students in 1971, exploited this power, with a broadcasting-led, distance education degree programme, delivered in modules, with high-quality print materials, supported by face-to-face tutorials, and an exclusively adult, part-time student population.

Other developments designed to increase the number of adult learners included: English programmes for speakers of other languages settling in the United Kingdom; programmes targeting people with disabilities; new horizons or new opportunities courses for women; women's studies programmes; Second Chance or Return to Learn programmes for people with no qualifications wishing to return to education; courses targeted at the unemployed: and Access courses offering adults without 'A'-

Levels, one-year programmes preparing them for entry to higher education. The development of Open College Networks provided a new type of flexible accreditation for programmes designed specifically to meet the needs of particular target groups.

During the 1980s also, intervention through national initiatives became an increasing feature of Britain's training policy. This was also the period in which policy began to focus, almost exclusively, on 'useful' learning.

From the creation of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in the early 1970s, but particularly since the early 1980s, there has been a consistent recognition that Britain could not meet its skills needs solely by focusing on the preparation of young people newly entering the labour force. At the same time, there has been a marked shift from the priorities of the MSC at the beginning of the 1980s, to those of its successor bodies more than a decade later.

A New Training Initiative (MSC, 1981) identified four kinds of need that would not be met by improving arrangements for the supply of young workers:

- the need for unskilled adults, or those with narrow manual or office skills, for a fresh start in growth areas of the economy
- the need for updating for workers whose existing skills have grown rusty or outdated
- the aspiration of skilled workers to seek progression to more responsible work, and
- the needs for new and additional skills to be grafted on to existing levels of competence, in response to new opportunities in the market for individuals and for firms.

Towards An Adult Training Strategy (MSC, 1983) also emphasised the special needs of people with disabilities, language needs or basic skills needs, and the need for good quality information and advice to ensure adults made effective informed choices about training. To back the analysis, the MSC introduced a range of short-life and large-scale programmes, including the Community Enterprise Programme, the Community Programme, RESTART, and Employment Training.

Employment Training (ET) and RESTART were introduced following the publication of a Department of Employment White Paper, *Training for Employment* (DE 1988a), which explained the case for a new programme for unemployed adults in the following terms:

> *'First, many job seekers — particularly those who have been unemployed for six months or more — lack the skills to fill jobs our economy is generating. Second, many long-term unemployed people have lost touch with the job market, and lack motivation to take up a job, training or other opportunities. Third, there is evidence,*

> *particularly in the more prosperous parts of the country, that significant numbers of benefit claimants are not genuinely available 'for work.'*

On the basis of this third observation, it became harder in many parts of the country, following the introduction of ET, for unemployed adults to study part-time in further education colleges. They had been entitled so to do under the '21 hour rule', a convention applied by (the then) Department of Health and Social Security enabling adults to study up to 21 hours, whilst registering as available to work and continuing to claim benefit. (In recent years the period allowed for study has been reduced to 16 hours.) The introduction of ET was accompanied by stricter definitions of 'available for work', particularly in areas where unemployment had fallen, with the result that significant numbers of people were obliged to discontinue their studies.

By November 1988, a new White Paper, *Employment for the 1990s* (DE, 1988b) recognised that the country needed to foster a learning workforce. Demographic and industrial change meant, it was argued, that women, black people, older workers and people with disabilities would need to be recruited in increasing numbers and persuaded to become more skilled, if Britain was to maintain its share of increasingly global markets. As with other training policy papers throughout the 1980s, *Employment for the 1990s* (DE, 1988b) assumed that employers and individuals would meet the costs of this expansion of training.

To encourage this expansion, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs, see 2.2.6), were established in the wake of the White Paper as independent training companies, with Boards dominated by local businessmen, to replace the publicly accountable Area Manpower Boards. TECs were given the power of veto over 25 per cent of Local Education Authority (LEA, see 2.2.4) budgets for work-related further education. This continued a process established in the early 1980s, when the LEAs were required to submit work-related further education plans, and later FE Development Plans to the MSC, in order to secure a proportion of their budgets. While the policy was designed to lead to greater strategic planning at local, rather than just central, level and closer links between education and industry, it also reflected a market-oriented approach to policy prevalent at the time. As the Trades Union Congress observed in Skills 2000 (TUC, 1989):

> *'in no developed economy is the market vested with such power over training today ... [and nowhere else] ... is it considered that individual investment decisions will provide the sort of trained workforce that a developed economy of the next century will need.'*

2.3.3 The 1990s

The next major milestone was the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) the most significant features of which, in the context of this review, were:

- the removal of Further Education Colleges from Local Authority control and their establishment as independent corporations
- the establishment of the Further Education Funding Council (see Section 2.2.5).
- The division of the FE curriculum into 'Schedule 2' courses (including *inter alia*, accredited courses, basic education provision, Access courses, courses for people with learning difficulties) to be funded centrally by the FEFC and 'non-Schedule 2' provision (basically non-accredited, 'leisure' provision), to be funded through local authority main revenues or by other means.

The 1992 Act, was seen by some observers at the time as likely to extinguish an important part of the adult education tradition (a fear underlined by the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority, a 'flagship' adult education provider (Tuckett, 1988)). However, it actually triggered both an increase in adult participation (in certain forms of education and training) and a greater interest in which sections of the population were or were not participating. At the same time, because of difficulties experienced in funding non-Schedule 2 provision, it led to a reduction of the number of local learning access points and reduced provision of non-accredited and first step courses that help adults re-enter learning — developments that particularly affected women and older adults.

Another significant development during the 1990s was the establishment of Adult Learners Week as an annual event across the country. Co-ordinated by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and supported by a range of national and international, public and private, agencies, the week has done much to raise the profile of adult learning nationally.

Measures to widen participation

One of the aims given to the Further Education Funding Council when it was set up was:

> *'to promote access to further education for people who do not participate in education and training but who could benefit from it'*

and among its duties is:

> *'to have regard for the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.'*
>
> (Further and Higher Education Act, 1992)

In December 1994, the Council set up a Widening Participation Committee to advise it on ways of achieving that goal. The interim and final reports of that Committee (FEFC 1997a, FEFC 1997b), their accompanying research and publications, and the action which flowed from it, signalled that a sea-change in public thinking might be coming about. The election of a Labour government in May 1997 and the policies and funding increases which ensued have placed the social purpose agenda back on centre stage. Even before the Widening Participation Committee, the Council had established a Committee to review the range and type of further education made available to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and to make recommendations on how the Council might better fulfil its duties towards them. The report of this Committee (FEFC, 1996) has had similarly beneficial and far reaching consequences for this important minority of students.

These hugely influential reports are known as the Tomlinson Report (on special needs) (FEFC, 1996) and the Kennedy Report (on widening participation more generally) (FEFC, 1997b), after their respective Chairs.

The remit given to the FEFC to pay greater attention to the needs of adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, and to widen participation more generally, laid the foundations for an expansion and improvement in educational opportunities for adults, despite the apparent thrust of the Act to narrow the range of education which could be supported from public funds.

Participation in higher education has also expanded rapidly in recent years, given impetus by the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) and subsequent action on funding to widen participation by the Higher Education Funding Councils. However, the phasing out of the maintenance grant and introduction of student loans appears to have brought about a reduction in the numbers of mature students entering university.

Widening participation in community-based learning has been given impetus by another influential report which was published towards the end of 1999. The final report of the Policy Action Team on Skills (*Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal*, DfEE, 1999i) put emphasis on local learning initiatives, driven by local priorities and owned by local people, as a means of reducing social exclusion and developing a lifelong learning culture. The recommendations included in the report have been taken on board by the government (see 2.4).

2.3.4 General themes

Some general themes can be seen to run through this brief history which help to explain the current configuration of provision of learning opportunities for adults:

- innovation in provision — giving rise to some of the great successes, *eg* the Open University, Open College Networks (OCNs), Access courses
- changing priorities — in which controversies over social purpose and equity have had a shaping influence amid

ongoing debates about usefulness and vocationalism versus general and 'leisure' education

- the 'colonisation' of adult provision — with institutions and organisations for adults and/or the working classes being taken over by the younger cohorts and the middle classes
- reverse colonisation — the absence of regulatory restrictions on age ranges in both further and higher education, allowing a kind of reverse colonisation, so that by the end of the 1980s adults rather than the traditional cohorts (16-19 in HE; 18+ in HE) formed a majority in both sectors
- the persistence of structures and funding mechanisms suitable to full-time young students in many institutions long after these became a minority of students
- the persistent raising by adult educators of the questions 'who participates?' and 'who is excluded?'
- a growing attachment to the concept of lifelong learning as a theme for both social and economic policy. This has led to a demand for credit-bearing courses and for opportunities to have recognised the learning which adults have previously achieved. It has also led to the need for qualifications that are transferable, and for modes of study flexible enough to be fitted round the other pressures on adults' lives.
- the development of new qualification routes (including National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Open College Networks (OCNs).

2.4 Current government policy

The advent of a new and different government in the UK in May 1997 marked a real change in the way adult learning is perceived and promoted in England.

The most important milestones on the road to what the government clearly sees as a new kind of Britain in a Learning Age have been:

- the establishment and work of The National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (NAGCELL)
- the publication of the Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) and its accompanying papers
- the implementation of pledges in the field of Lifelong Learning made in the Labour Party's election manifesto (including Ufi, and Individual Learning Accounts)
- the revision of the National Education and Training Targets
- the publication of the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999g)
- the increase in funding for post-school education and the 'ear-marking' of considerable sums for adult learners

- the establishment of specific project funding for targeted initiatives (for example the Adult Community Learning Fund)
- the establishment and reports of the National Skills Task Force (DfEE, 1998m; DfEE, 1999c)
- the establishment and report of the Policy Action Team (PAT) on skills
- the requirement on Local Education Authorities to produce Lifelong Learning Development Plans
- the establishment of Learning Partnerships
- the announcement of the National Grid for Learning (DfEE, 1997).

These culminated in the publication of the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999g), the *Learning and Skills Council Prospectus* (DfEE, 1999l) and the Learning and Skills Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on the 16 December 1999 (see 2.4.2).

Following the government's 'Comprehensive Spending Review' £16 billion additional funding was allocated for education in England. Subsequent announcements have allocated large specific sums from this, and set targets for expanding the number of adult learners.

Some developments have had a key influence in shaping policy. The National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (NAGCELL), comprising leading policy-makers, policy advocates and practitioners in the field of Adult and Lifelong Learning, was established almost immediately after the General Election. Its first task was to advise government on the preparation of what became of the Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i). Its advice, much of which found its way into that Green Paper and the initiatives which flowed from it, is found in its first report, *Learning for the 21st Century* (NAGCELL, 1997). Its second report, *Creating Learning Cultures* (NAGCELL, 1999) takes the arguments further and makes many detailed recommendations. On page five of this second report are listed twenty-three 'Key Initiatives in Lifelong Learning'. Others have come on stream since. The most significant to this Thematic Review are discussed below.

Another report which has had a decisive impact on policy is *Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal*, 1999 by the Policy Action Team on Skills (DfEE, 1999i). Many of the recommendations made in the report have fed into the Learning and Skills Council Prospectus (DfEE, 1999l), according to which the new Learning and Skills Councils will give a high priority to meeting the needs of socially disadvantaged people, and will encourage the building of local capacity in disadvantaged communities by ensuring that more 'first rung' learning opportunities are available to people in those areas.

2.4.1 The policy vision

The challenge the government has set itself, was set out in *The Learning Age* Green Paper (DfEE, 1998i):

> *'Learning is the key to prosperity — for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole. Investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty-first century. This is why the Government has put learning at the heart of its ambition.*
>
> *'To achieve stable and sustainable growth, we will need a well-educated, well-equipped and adaptable labour force. To cope with rapid change and the challenge of the information and communication age, we must ensure that people can return to learning throughout their lives. We cannot rely on a small elite, no matter how highly educated or highly paid. Instead, we need the creativity, enterprise and scholarship of all our people.*
>
> *'As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfil our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings.*
>
> *'To realise our ambition, we must all develop and sustain a regard for learning at whatever age. For many people this will mean overcoming past experiences which have put them off learning. For others it will mean taking the opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to recognise their own talent, to discover new ways of learning and to see new opportunities opening up. What was previously available only to the few can, in the century ahead, be something which is enjoyed and taken advantage of by the many.'*

2.4.2 Implementing new policies

In June, 1999, the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 1999g) set out the government's proposals to overhaul the post-16 education and training system. This was followed by a Prospectus which, following consultation on the White Paper, set out in more detail what the new structure would look like, and on 16 December by the Learning and Skills Bill.

The government's central proposal is to establish a **Learning and Skills Council** (LSC) for England which will deliver all post-16 education and training (excluding Higher Education) from April 2001. The Council will be advised primarily by two committees: one with direct responsibility for young people, the other with responsibility for adult learners.

The new council will assume responsibility for:

- funding the further education sector, previously the responsibility of the Further Education Funding Council (2.2.5)
- funding government-supported workforce development and training, previously the responsibility of Training and Enterprise Councils (2.2.6)
- developing, in partnership with local education authorities (2.2.4) arrangements for adult and community learning
- advising the government on the National Learning Targets, previously the responsibility of the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (2.2.9)
- providing information, advice and guidance to adults.

The LSC for England will have a budget of around £6 billion and responsibility for the education and training of about six million adults and young people. Its primary function will be to meet the needs of business, individuals and communities by putting in place a consistent and coherent system of funding.

The Council will work through a network of 47 local Learning and Skills Councils. The local LSCs will plan and co-ordinate provision locally and establish clear lines of accountability to the communities they serve.

Learning Partnerships (2.4.4) will ensure that the system is responsive to local needs. LSCs will be required to consult Partnerships in drawing up their plans. Regional Development Agencies' (2.2.8) plans will provide a framework for the LSCs in identifying skill needs and the LSC plans will need RDA support before being formally approved. Local Education Authorities (2.2.4) will continue to be responsible for submitting strategic plans which demonstrate how they will contribute to securing adults and community learning for their area. Local LSCs will be required to consult local authorities on their plans and set out in them the LEA contribution.

The government's proposals have received general approval from those working in the field of adult learning. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education welcomed them as *'a New Dawn for Adult Learners'*.

In higher education the government has announced a target of one in two people benefiting from higher education by the age of 30 by 2009, and a plan to develop two-year 'foundation' vocational degrees along the lines of the US model.[1] A consultation document on the proposed 'foundation degrees' has been circulated.

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[1] Prime Minister's Romanes Lecture, Oxford, November 1999.

2.4.3 Funding

In the financial year 1997-98, the central government spent £10,607 million on 'Lifelong Learning Policies' (see Table 2.3). This includes monies allocated to the Higher and Further Education Funding Councils (see 2.2 above) for all students, whether adult or not. In addition, local authorities spend money on adult education (varying between 50p and £24.50 a head according to DfEE estimates [DfEE, 1999k]). Such expenditure is separate from money spent by individuals and employers (see Section 3.6).

2.4.4 Key adult learning initiatives

In the rest of this section, we summarise what seem to us to be the most significant of the government's specific initiatives for adult learners, as at 31 December 1999. Most of them will, to some extent, be consolidated and given coherence under the proposals of the Learning and Skills Bill (2.4.2).

Adult and Community Learning Fund

The Adult and Community Learning Fund will provide £5 million in 1999-00 to support innovative community-based activity offering opportunities for learning. To date, some 160 projects have been agreed. The Fund supports the DfEE's aim of widening participation in learning, and strengthening the capacity of neighbourhood 'self-help' groups to provide services for local people. The Fund is based on the government's belief in the vital role of learning in regenerating disadvantaged areas. The DfEE is looking to attract co-sponsorship for projects from trusts, charities and companies. The Fund is managed on the DfEE's behalf by the Basic Skills Agency and NIACE (see Section 2.2). In its first year of operation, 218 projects in disadvantaged areas were supported by the Fund.

Basic Skills initiatives

Currently around 250,000 adults are being helped to improve their basic skills. The government's immediate aim, set out in the Green Paper on lifelong learning, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) is to double the number of people helped in basic skills by 2002 to 500,000 a year. To meet this target the government has:

- increased the help already given through further and adult education to all adults, with innovative forms of provision such as summer schools for basic skills, which reached around 11,000 in 1998
- commissioned the Report of the Moser Committee and responded with a timetable for implementing many of its recommendations

Table 2.3: DfEE expenditure on Lifelong Learning, 1993 to 2000

	1993-94 outturn (£)	1994-95 outturn (£)	1995-96 outturn (£)	1996-97 outturn (£)	1997-98 outturn (£)	1998-99 estimated outturn (£)	1999-00 plans (£)
Lifelong learning	**9,584**	**10,268**	**10,441**	**10,530**	**10,607**	**10,700**	**11,304**
– of which:							
Further Education Funding Council	2,701	2,840	3,025	3,154	3,154	3,114	3,336
FE Student Support				6	6	10	47
Careers Service	20	149	193	199	208	208	227
HE Development Programme	12	11	7	4	6	7	5
Work Based Training for Young People	640	647	635	734	740	741	864
Neighbourhood Support Fund	20						
Adult Education and Skills Initiative*	5	6	4	5	5	100	64
Youth Services	5	5	5	4	4	4	5
Youth Enterprise initiative	5	2	3	3	3	4	4
Qualifications Framework	32	31	57	68	69	72	79
Training Inspectorate						5	7
Higher Education Funding Council**	2,792	3,419	3,612	3,448	3,508	3,539	4,057
Student Loans RAB charge	110	200	260	330	369	440	754
Mandatory Awards: Maintenance and Fees***	2,749	2,437	2,107	2,008	1,982	1,897	1,169
Access Funds	24	27	28	22	22	39	56
Teacher Training Agency	0	2	126	196	211	210	237
Student Loans admin	14	17	19	16	19	19	23
British Academy	22	23	24	24	29	29	31
Local Competitiveness Budget	56	63	65	76	62	55	65
FE Collaboration Fund	103	106	31	29	16	26	0
16-19 Partnership Fund							5
TEC Strategy Budget	108	137	123	133	156	135	117
TVEI	119	83	52	22	4	0	0
Career Development Loans	8	10	12	14	11	13	13
Individual Learning Accounts						2	6

* £60 million was made available in the 1998 budget for the setting up of a number of Centres of Excellence for IT and High Technology training and Skills Challenge projects.

**The 1999-00 figure includes amounts to be transferred to the Teacher Training Agency and for Widening Access.

***Also includes funds to be transferred to Wales as a result of changes to the student support system arising from the Dearing Review.

Source: DfEE, 1999 — Departmental Report: the Government's Expenditure Plans 1999-00 to 2000-02

- worked with Mersey TV, Channel 4 and Collins to support 800 'Brookie Basics'[1] clinics to encourage adults to address their literacy problems as part of the National Year of Reading
- given priority within the new Learning Partnerships to co-ordination of local action which will ensure that basic skills provision meets local needs effectively
- asked Ufi to focus on basic skills as one of its key education areas, with the aim of helping up to 200,000 people a year within its first five years
- encouraged National Training Organisations to facilitate the provision of basic and key skills education — around a quarter now do so.

Family literacy and family numeracy

Involving parents in their children's education can be beneficial to parents' further education and work prospects, as well as supporting children's attainment. The DfEE provided £4 million in 1998-99 for around 6,000 parents and their children to attend Family Literacy courses. In 1999-00 a grant of £5 million will provide funding for all local education authorities (LEAs) and a further £1 million will be available for a new Family Numeracy initiative in around 50 LEAs.

Local Authority Adult Education

The Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) included a priority for early action to establish local planning for lifelong learning by all the key players. Recognising the important role local authorities can play in widening participation in adult learning, the DfEE is providing a Standards Fund grant to support expenditure of £9 million in 1999-00 to help local authorities develop Lifelong Learning Development Plans. Local authorities can expect this provision to double in size in the following two years. Precise figures on the money available will be announced nearer the time. Under the proposals set out in the Learning and Skills Bill (2.4.2), their plans will form a key part local Learning and Skill Council strategic plans.

Learning Partnerships

A network of 100 Learning Partnerships has been established. They stem from a national agreement between central government, local government, the Further Education and Training Enterprise Council national bodies, to work together to establish a single strategic body in each local area to bring together all existing agencies involved in post-16 education.

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[1] The name is based on the title of a popular television 'soap' '*Brookside*' which included a character with literacy problems who was successfully helped by a local basic skills service.

The partnerships provide a forum for collaboration in a complex organisational area. They aim to ensure that gaps in local provision are filled and duplication avoided by co-ordinating local curriculum planning and staff development.

The partnerships will be the channels by which the learning needs of local communities will be made known to the local Learning and Skills Councils, when these are established.

Information, advice and guidance for adults

The DfEE published the policy and consultation document, *The Learning Age, Local Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults in England — Towards a National Framework*, on 1 January 1999. This set a framework for a new national service, to ensure that basic local information and advice of reliable quality was available to adult learners and potential learners across England.

The service will build on, rather than replace, current provision, through local networks under the auspices of local authority Learning Partnerships working in close collaboration. Such networks are likely to include careers service companies, TECs, local authorities, further and higher education institutions, voluntary sector organisations and private providers. Local networks will work closely with **learndirect**. Both the local and national services will use the same database of learning opportunities, and individuals will be referred from **learndirect** to local networks as appropriate.

The DfEE will invest £7 million of new resources in the service in 1999-00.

Under the proposals set out in the Learning and Skills Bill (2.4.2), responsibility for information advice and guidance for adults will be assumed by the Learning and Skills Council.

learndirect helpline

Since its launch in February 1998, the government's national learning and careers helpline **learndirect** (formerly called Learning Direct) has dealt with over one million calls from members of the public. Its freephone telephone number (0800 100 900) was used for enquiries during Adult Learners' Week in May 1998, and it served the BBC's 'Computers Don't Bite' campaign. In the coming period, **learndirect** will be developed further and enhanced to provide additional services as a gateway to Ufi.

In 1997-8, the expenditure on **learndirect** was £1 million, and is estimated at £3.3 million in 1998-99. £6.25 million is available in 1999-00.

According to **learndirect**'s own customer satisfaction survey, 94 per cent of callers felt the service was good. Nearly half the callers were qualified at Level 2 or below (see Table 2.1).

National Grid for Learning

The government is committed to:

> *'securing the benefits of advanced network technologies for education and lifelong learning and, through the creation of a National Grid for Learning, helping to bring about our vision of a Learning Society.'*

This new development will be:

> *'An infrastructure and service for networking and learning. The Grid will not be provided by any one company but will be the framework for a mosaic of interconnected networks and services. We intend that the Grid will focus initially on teacher development and the school sector and extend to lifelong learning — whether home-based learning, further and higher education, or training for employment. It will link closely with out plans for ICT training funded through the National Lottery and for the University for Industry. National and local museums, galleries and other content providers will have an important part to play. We intend that libraries, with their vast stores of information and accessibility to the public, will be an integral part of the Grid. In this way the Grid will make available to all learners the riches of the world's intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage. Because information can be distributed virtually free over the Internet, the Grid will open up learning to the individual and take it beyond the confines of institutional walls.'*
>
> (DfEE, 1997)

Ufi

From its launch in the year 2000, Ufi will play a key role in realising the Department's plans to develop a nationwide commitment to lifelong learning. It is an important element of the wider set of lifelong learning policies set out in the government's Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i).

Ufi is intended to be a new kind of organisation, working in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors, to promote and broker open and distance learning. With the twin aims of boosting the competitiveness of business and of encouraging and enabling individuals to enhance their employability and engagement in society, Ufi intends to:

- stimulate both the demand for the supply of high-quality learning opportunities
- use information and communications technologies (ICT) to encourage innovative and cost-effective ways to learn, and
- bring learning into the workplace, the home, and the community via a national network of learning centres.

It will operate under the brand name of '**learndirect**'.

By providing reliable and accessible information and advice through the **learndirect** helpline, the Ufi will provide a simple, clear route to learning opportunities. It will promote learning, ranging from the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to specialised technological skills and business management. It will also stimulate new markets and commission leading edge, multimedia-based products to fill gaps in provision. DfEE has provided an estimated £8.8 million in 1998-99 from its own resources for start-up costs, supplemented by £4.2 million from the Windfall Tax.

A further £40 million has been announced for Ufi in 1999-00 and £77 million from the ESF ADAPT programme is being used:

> *'to finance programmes which not only take forward the aims and objectives of ADAPT but also contribute towards the development of Ufi.'*

IT Learning Centres

In March 1999, the government announced its intention to establish some 800 learning centres for adults and businesses, to improve access to technology and ICT-based learning in communities, especially disadvantaged areas.

These centres, which will be developed over the next three years, are expected to engage a wide range of partners (from the public, private and voluntary sectors). The government is putting in place structures to ensure effective co-ordination with other relevant initiatives, in particular the Ufi network, to increase the impact locally in communities.

The New Deal

The New Deal is a key part of the government's welfare to work strategy and provides beneficiaries with chance to develop their potential, gain skills and experience, and find work. Parts of the New Deal are aimed at young unemployed people aged 18 to 24, but other elements are focussed on older people including the unemployed aged over 25 and, from April 2000, those aged over 50. There are also specific programmes for lone parents and people with disabilities. Common elements of all aspects of the New Deal include the provision of tailored career information and advice, financial support, and education and training opportunities to help people secure employment.

The New Deal for 25 plus

The education and training opportunities available under the New Deal for those aged 25+, and unemployed for two years or more, are designed to provide extra opportunities for long-term unemployed people to learn new skills, or refresh existing ones, and to help them find and retain employment. People on New Deal 25+ will be allowed to undertake full-time education or training for up to a year. They will be able to train or study up to broadly S/NVQ3 level, with some people undertaking higher level courses.

To be eligible to undertake a full-time New Deal course applicants must: be aged 25 years or over; have made a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); and have been receiving JSA (or a combination of JSA, Unemployment Benefit (UB) or Income Support (IS) as an unemployed person), or credits as an unemployed person, for two years or more in a continuous or linking claim immediately before they start on the qualifying course. In addition, refugees or those with exceptional leave to remain in the country may count periods on income support as an asylum seeker towards the two year period.

New Deal for 50 plus

From April 2000, people aged 50 and over who have not been working for six months and in receipt of welfare benefits will be eligible to join the New Deal and receive help from a personal adviser with such things as job search skills and work-based training for adults.

Work-based Learning for Adults

Work-based Learning for Adults (WBLA) is a programme for adults (aged over 25) who have been unemployed for at least six months, to provide them with the skills they need to get a job. The WBLA programme aims to help unemployed adults move into sustained employment or make a success of self-employment, and to help the long-term unemployed acquired occupational skills needed to address skill shortages. These objectives will be met through work-based learning and other learning activity and support, customised to trainee need (see 3.2.4).

The programme has succeeded Work-based Training for Adults, Training for Work and Employment Training as the main form of support for unemployed adults.

National Skills Task Force

The Secretary of State set up the National Skills Task Force in Spring 1998 to advise on the development of a national skills agenda. The aim is to ensure that England has the skills needed to sustain high levels of employment, compete in global markets and provide opportunities for all. The Task Force published its preliminary findings in *Towards a National Skills Agenda* (DfEE, 1998, 1999c and 2000). Its final report and recommendations are due in May 2000.

Skills Development Fund

In his speech to the TUC Conference on 15 September 1998, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment announced the £39 million Skills Development Fund to help improve skills for the new millennium. The funding package will help the new Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), working with further and higher education, TECs and other partners to develop and implement regional skill strategies. £5 million of the £39 million is set aside for a 'Rapid Response Fund' to help to re-train those involved in large-scale redundancies. These skill strategies will provide a framework for the plans of the proposed new local Learning and Skills Councils.

Workforce Development

Workforce development is a key strategic issue for all industry sectors. By April 2001 all National Training Organisations (NTOs) should have drawn up Workforce Development Plans which will provide a structured and coherent way for NTOs to define the learning and skills needs of their sectors. Plans will be based on a common framework currently being developed. The framework will allow for differing sector characteristics, but will have common themes which need to be addressed. It is intended to help bring together into a plan of action the best labour market information, business needs analyses, forecasts of skills shortages, and the personal aspirations of individuals at all levels.

Investors in People

Investors in People is a national standard based on four key principles:

- top-level commitment to develop all employees
- regular review of training and development of all employees
- action to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout their employment, and
- evaluating the outcomes of training and development as a basis for continuous improvement.

Some 16 per cent of UK employees work in organisations that are recognised as Investors in People and a further 34 per cent are in organisations committed to achieving the standard.[1]

Investors in People benefits companies by helping them target their training and development on business needs, as well as encouraging them to evaluate how effective it has been. It also benefits individuals by encouraging them to develop their skills. IiP UK Ltd are the national guardians of the standard, charged with maintaining quality and developing and promoting the standard.

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[1] IiP (UK) Ltd data, September 1999.

Investors has had a generally positive reception from employers, and research evidence indicates that it positively contributes to improvements in the management and delivery of workplace training and development and can have a positive impact on business performance (Tamkin *et al.*, 2000).

Union Learning Fund

The Union Learning Fund was announced in *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) and builds on the experience the unions have already gained through the 'Bargaining for Skills' initiative. The aim is to encourage them to support members (and through them, others) to seek learning opportunities, choose wisely and complete successfully.

In 1998-99 there were 66 bids for funding of which 45 were accepted. Unions involved include the AEEU, GMB and UNISON, as well as smaller unions such as the National Union of Journalists and the Musicians' Union. The criteria for acceptance were that the bids were innovative, sustainable, and that they included one or more key features such as advice/guidance, equality/access, young workers, or organisation and development.

Individual Learning Accounts

The DfEE is establishing a national framework of learning accounts to encourage individuals to invest and plan for their learning, enabling them to take greater control over their career and personal development. Discussions with key partners, such as the FE sector, learning providers, individuals, other government departments, TECs and financial institutions, have been taking place to help inform the development of the national framework from the year 2000 and beyond. The national framework will be run by a customer service provider, a private sector organisation which the government expects to appoint in the Spring. It will be responsible for the national administration of individual learning accounts. It is planned that further details of the roll-out of the national framework will be announced in May or June 2000.

As a first step, across the UK over the next three years the government is drawing on £150 million of TEC resources to open one million accounts. Around 847,000 of these accounts will be available in England, using around £127 million of TEC resources. The first million accounts will be available to anyone aged 19 or over in the world of work.

To date over 100,000 accounts have been opened. By March 2001, the government expects there will be 500,000 accounts opened, rising to one million by March 2002.

In order to ensure that learning accounts are sustainable beyond the initial investment of £150 million, the March 1999 Budget announced a range of incentives for learning account holders. Anyone aged 19 or over with an individual learning account will be able to claim a discount of 20 percent on a wide range of eligible learning, the discount will apply on the first £500 of personal expenditure. A limited range of learning, such as computer literacy, will qualify for an eighty per cent discount.

In addition, where an employer contributes to an individual's learning account this is deductible for tax purposes, providing the opportunity to learn is offered across the company's entire workforce. Employees will not be required to pay tax or national insurance on the contribution. This will provide a continuous incentive beyond the first piece of learning.

Career Development Loans

Career Development Loans (CDLs) aim to encourage people to take responsibility for advancing their own careers by giving them initial financial help to pay for vocational training. They are available through four High Street banks and have been available throughout Great Britain since July 1988. Up to the end of September 1998, some £336 million had been advanced to over 105,000 applicants since the programme began. Surveys in the twelve months up to 30 September 1998 show that:

- 82 per cent of trainees completed their courses
- 71 per cent had obtained jobs immediately on completing training, and
- 74 per cent of trainees felt that taking out a CDL had improved their career prospects.

Small Firms Training Loans

The Small Firms Training Loans programme helps small firms to improve the skills of their employees and so increase productivity and growth. The programme is run in conjunction with eight High Street banks. Loans of between £500 and £125,000 are available to help meet training costs for firms with up to 50 employees. Repayments are deferred for between six and twelve months depending on the amount borrowed, and the loan is interest-free to the borrower during the deferred repayment period.

3. Participation

In this section we examine the available data and research on participation in learning amongst adults in England. We begin by discussing some of the main data sources and the way they define 'adults' and in particularly 'learning'. We then turn to examine the level and nature of participation in adult learning and the factors affecting participation.

3.1 Data sources

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is no single accepted definition of an 'adult learner' — either in terms of who is an adult, or what constitutes learning. The different definitions are reflected in the various sources of statistical data and, to an extent, in the results that they portray, *ie* the wider the definition of learning, the greater the apparent number of participants.

The main sources of data examined in this review are summarised in Table 3.1, which sets out the definitions of learning used and the age groups included.

All the surveys have particular advantages and disadvantages as a data source for adult learning. One of the problems from which they suffer is that they often rely on respondents' own views of what constitutes learning (*ie* education or training). Unless prompted, respondents tend to only refer to more formal learning episodes (Campenelli and Channell, 1994).

In this and subsequent chapters we have primarily used Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. It is the most regularly conducted of the surveys and therefore gives us data over time. In many ways it is the most detailed source (allowing us to break down the results for England, by a range of variables). Furthermore, comparable surveys are conducted throughout the European Union. However, its reliability as a source for thorough information on learning participation has been questioned. Felstead *et al.* (1998) argue that the way in which the data are collected may lead to under-counting the amount of training taking place. In particular, informal and non-vocational forms of learning may be underestimated.

Table 3.1: Main sources of data on adult learning

Source (sponsor/author)	Date of Survey	Age Group Covered	Definition of Learning
Labour Force Survey [LFS] (DfEE)	Quarterly	16 to 64 (men) 16 to 59 (women)	Learning/training for those in employment (this is the main focus of the LFS). It distinguishes between on-the job learning (*ie informal learning* — learning by example and practise while doing a job), and off the job learning (*ie formal learning* — any training conducted in a classroom or training section). LFS also covers those in employment who are enrolled on education and leisure classes. Learning for those not in employment. Within this, LFS covers participation in government training/learning schemes. However, there is no reference made specifically to those not in employment who have taken up other learning or education opportunities.
National Adult Learning Survey [NALS] (DfEE)	1997	16 to 69	This survey distinguishes between: *taught learning and non-taught learning* — see Chapter 1
The Learning Divide; Marking Time (NIACE)	1996 1999	17 +	Learning can mean *'practising, studying, or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full time or part time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.'*
Attitudes to Learning (MORI / Campaign for Learning)	1998	16 +	As for NALS

Source: IES, NIACE, 1999

The term 'adult learner' (in relation to the LFS) has been defined as individuals aged between the ages of 25 and 64 who:

- were enrolled for part-time study at educational institutions, or
- were undertaking part-time correspondence courses (including those enrolled on Open University courses), or
- had been involved in vocational training, connected to a current or future job, in the last four weeks, both on-the-job and away from the job.

This is therefore a very vocational and immediate definition with an emphasis on current or future job, and on current or very recent learning episodes. Where relevant, we have supplemented the LFS data with information from the other surveys in Table 3.1 (summarised in Appendix).

3.2 Level of participation in adult learning in England

According to the LFS, over 3.3 million adults were participating in learning activity at the end of 1998 (see Table 3.2). This represents some 13 per cent of adults in the age group, excluding the further 300,000 who were attending full-time education (*eg* at a university). The data in the table also suggest that the participation rate has been rising during the 1990s from around 11 per cent in the early part of the decade. However, some commentators argue that this does not mean that the amount of training undertaken is actually rising. Green (1999), examines the LFS in more detail and concludes that the average length of a training episode has been falling over the period. Therefore, he concludes, the volume of training (in Britain) in 1997 was no higher than in the mid-1990s.

At the other end of the spectrum of adult learner definitions, NALS (conducted in 1997) found that 68 per cent of the total population (*ie* 16 to 69 year olds including full-time students) had taken part in some kind of learning activity (excluding involvement in continuous full-time education) in the previous three years. This included either taught or non-taught learning and/or vocational or non-vocational learning.

The NALS study suggests a higher level of participation than other surveys of learning activity. For instance, an SCPR survey in 1993 (Park, 1994) found that 48 per cent of 16 to 54 year olds had taken part in vocational learning in the previous three years (compared with an equivalent figure from NALS of 69 per cent). The Learning Divide survey by NIACE in 1996 (Sargant *et al.*, 1997) found only 40 per cent of adults aged 17 and above were either in full-time education or had undertaken some other form of learning in the previous three-year period (or since they had left full-time education). The equivalent NALS figure was 76 per

Table 3.2: Participation in Adult Learning 1990-1999 in England

	No. of adult learners	Percentage of Adult Learners outside initial education
1998	3,340,117	13.0
1997	3,137,017	12.3
1996	3,149,819	12.4
1995	3,007,540	12.0
1994	2,760,582	11.1
1993	2,760,157	11.2
1992	2,600,200	10.6
1991	2,611,570	10.9
1990	2,605,097	10.9

Source: Labour Force Survey, Winter 1998 cent. The differences between the surveys were attributed, by the NALS researchers, to the different forms of questioning used.

A further source is the Attitudes to Learning survey conducted by MORI for the Campaign for Learning (1998), which found 47 per cent of adults had participated in taught learning during the last 12 months and 56 per cent had participated in non-taught learning during the last 12 months.

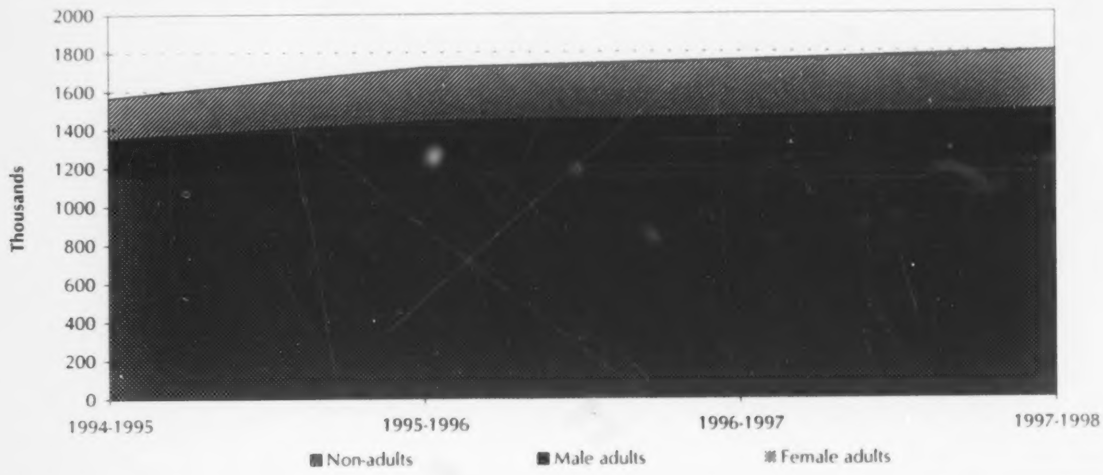
3.2.1 Adults in Higher Education

Another perspective comes from looking at participation levels in forms of learning. There is a high level of participation in higher education among young people and adults, and participation levels have increased steadily over the last decade. According to data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), out of a total of 1.8 million students in the UK, 550,000 were aged over 25 and undertaking part-time higher education courses in 1997/98 — nearly 40 per cent more than the 400,000 engaged in 1994/95.

While participation in higher education has been rising generally in recent years, much of the increase has come from a greater number of mature students. In 1994/95 adults comprised 27 per cent of the student body and this had risen to 31 per cent by 1997/98. In 1997/98, 55 per cent of mature students (*ie* those aged over 25) were women, compared with 51 per cent in 1994/95 (see Figure 3.1).

A further 137,000 adults aged over 25 (49 per cent women) were undertaking Open University courses, a quarter more than the 110,000 three years earlier.

Figure 3.1: Participation in higher education in the UK



Source: HESA

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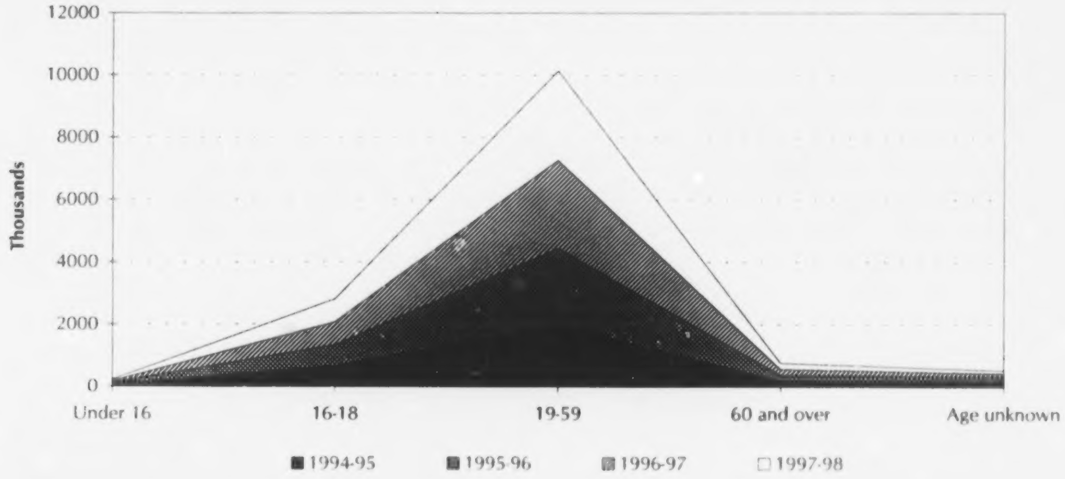
Figure 3.2: Adult participation in further education in England



Source: FEFC

3.2.2 Adults in Further Education

Figure 3.2 presents data for participation in further education between 1994/95 and 1997/98. It shows a rising trend in participation, particularly among those aged 19 or over, with numbers up by 30 per cent overall and by 42 per cent among adults.

According to the FEFC (FEFC, 2000) in 1997/98, 2.3 million out of the 3.5 million students studying further education courses in further education colleges were aged 25 and over. Most (73 per cent) were studying part-time in general further education or tertiary colleges for a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification. Some 58 per cent of these students were women and 42 per cent were men.

3.2.3 Adult education

In November 1998 there were over 1.1 million enrolments on adult education courses maintained, assisted or contracted out by local education authorities in England — a 4.9 per cent increase over the previous year (Figure 3.3). Just over half of the enrolments (51 per cent) were for evening courses, or for courses taught by open and distance learning. Two-thirds of enrolments were on courses which did not lead to a formal qualification (*eg* painting, basic language courses, writers workshops *etc.*). Over seven out of ten participants were women.

3.2.4 Work-based learning for adults

In June 1999, there were 31,700 adults (aged 25 or over) engaged on the government-sponsored Work-based Learning for Adults programme (WBLA, see Chapter 2). Around half of the people starting WBLA had been unemployed for more than a year prior

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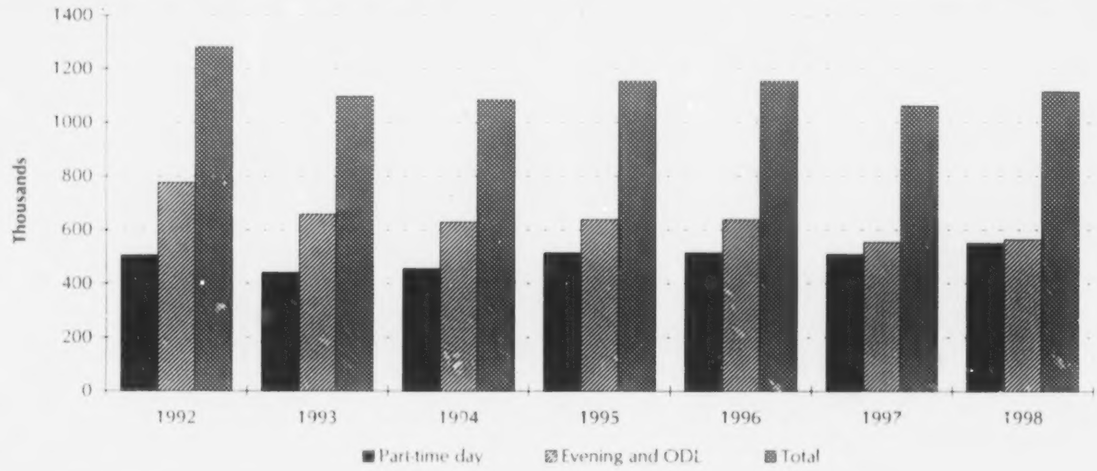
Figure 3.3: Recent enrolments in adult education courses in England



Source: DfEE Statistical Release SFR17/1999, 15 July 1999

to participating. Adult participation in such programmes has been declining in recent years, as unemployment has fallen. In the year 1992 to 1993, there was an average of 133,000 on (the then) Employment Training and Employment Action programmes.

The proportion of men and women on WBLA have been fairly stable throughout the programme, with women accounting for almost one-third of participants. One in five participants has disabilities, and 18 per cent are from ethnic minority groups.

3.3 Training in the workplace

According to the latest available Skill Needs in Britain Survey (IFF, 1998), over four out of five firms with 25 or more employees provide off-the-job training (rising to 92 per cent of those with 200 or more employees). The survey does not distinguish between training provided to young people or adults. Most off-the-job training concerns health and safety, induction training and training in new technology, although job specific training was provided by four out of five employers. The most common form of training provider are training companies (two-thirds of cases). In four out of ten cases, employers use further education colleges and in three in ten cases, equipment suppliers.

Nine out of ten also provide on-the-job training. However, smaller firms are much less likely to train their employees, at least formally, with only 36 per cent of those with fewer than 25 employees providing off-the-job training (DfEE, 1995). In most cases, on-the-job training is provided by a line manager or supervisor (79 per cent of cases) or an experienced colleague (64 per cent). Specialist training staff are used in 42 per cent of cases. Computer-based training packages are used by 25 per cent of employers providing on-the-job training.

As well as differences between firms based on their size, there are also differences between similar types of firms (*ie* size and sector) in terms of the distribution of training among employees. One-third of all employers provided training for between none and ten per cent of their workforce, while one-fifth provided training for 90 per cent of their employees (DfEE, 2000).

The type and quality of training also varies. While some 40 per cent of employer-funded training leads to a part or full qualification (DfEE, 2000), a substantial amount is related to induction and issues such as health and safety, rather than medium-term skill development (Hillage, 1996) (see section 2.2.30). Individual participation in training in the workplace is covered in the following section.

3.4 Who participates

It is difficult, in some ways, to obtain a clear picture of the overall amount of participation in learning among adults in England, as it depends on the definitions used. However, we can see from the Labour Force Survey that at any one time, one in seven adults (aged 25 or over) is actively engaged in formal learning activity. On a wider definition, two in three people, according to the National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) either are or have recently (*ie* within the previous three years) been involved in some form of learning activity.

The balance of evidence suggests that learning activity among adults is rising. However, there is a group of persistent non-learners, and participation is not uniform among all groups of the population. To examine the nature of participation in more detail we have looked at the following variables:

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- labour market status
- occupation
- previous educational experience, and
- social class.

3.4.1 Age

National participation surveys indicate that the older people are, the less likely they are to participate in learning, for instance according to the LFS (Winter 1998), 18 per cent of 25 to 29 year olds had taken part in training in the last four weeks compared with under ten per cent of those aged 50 or more. The National Adult Learners Survey (NALS) found that learners (mean age of 39.73) tended to be significantly younger than non-learners (mean age of 48.60). Over eight in ten of the respondents under 40 years of age had taken part in a learning activity in the past three years, but less than six in ten of those aged over 50. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of those aged 50-59 were learners, compared to 47 per cent of those aged over 60.

The decline in learning participation as people reach retirement age would suggest that there is a strong link between learning and work, a conclusion also reached by the NIACE participation surveys. This finding was confirmed in a follow-up survey to NALS of older learners and non-learners, aged 50 to 71 (Dench and Regan, 2000). This study found that participation in vocational learning declined as people approached retirement age, although non-vocational learning remained constant.

The study also found that retirement can act as a trigger both into and out of learning. Although many people associate learning with work and attending courses, which therefore reduces as people retire, the sample also included people who had increased, or changed the nature of their involvement in learning on retirement. People who had retired reported that their involvement in taught learning was related to personal interest, personal fulfilment and hobbies/spare time activities. The majority of non-taught learning was related to a person's interests, for example, crafts, gardening, music and drama. However, learning to use a computer was also common and the study argued that once older people overcome the initial barrier or fear of becoming an IT user, they can progress and become confident users.

In the workplace, younger workers are more likely to receive training than older workers (Tamkin and Hillage, 1997). This partly reflects induction and job-related training given to people new to a job, and also that some employers perceive less return for their investment in older workers. NALS found that learning done with a future job in mind was particularly likely to have been undertaken by younger respondents. Learning undertaken with voluntary work in mind was particularly likely to have been undertaken by people in their 50s or 60s.

There may be a link between the participation patterns of older people and changes in the structure of learning provision. Since the funding changes brought in by the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), for example, learning providers have concentrated efforts on providing courses with qualification outcomes in order to gain funding advantages and this has led to a reduction in the provision of non-accredited and 'recreational' courses.

Gender

The LFS data suggest that in recent years (since 1996) a slightly higher proportion of women participate in work-related training than men (*eg* 13.9 per cent compared with 12.2 per cent in 1998). However, this may be a function of increasing activity rates among women as they enter or return to the workforce in growing numbers and undergo induction and other basic work-related training.

Surveys of participation in any form of education or training paint a different picture. The 1999 NIACE survey of Adult Participation in Learning (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) found that, as a whole, more men than women participate in learning but that the gap is narrowing. Similarly, NALS (1997) found that men were more likely than women to be recent learners: 78 per cent of men had taken part in a learning activity in the three years prior to the survey, compared with 70 per cent of women. This gender skew persisted within the older age group (50+); there is still a gender skew, with women again less likely to be learners (66 per cent compared to 74 per cent of men) (Dench and Regan, 2000). However, there were differences in the types of learning engaged in. The NALS data indicated that women were less likely to have participated in vocational training than men, but more likely to have participated in non-vocational learning.

Nevertheless, detailed analysis of the NALS data indicates that gender is not a key predictive variable of people's participation in learning. The data reflect the influence of other variables such as the relationship to the labour market. Green (1999) concluded that there was:

> *'now little evidence of sex discrimination over the quantity of training received, though there remains the issue of occupational segregation which is often reinforced rather than challenged by the distribution of training places.'*

Ethnicity

Further and higher education statistics suggest that there may be greater variation in participation patterns between groups of different social and ethnic backgrounds, than between the sexes. For example, a considerably higher proportion of members of ethnic minorities continue in full-time education than members of the white population. In 1996, the gap between white people aged 16 to 24 and those from other ethnic backgrounds participating in full or part-time education was over 15 per cent.

In 1994-95, almost one in eight of all UK-domiciled students taking first degrees were from non-white ethnic groups, more than double their overall representation in the UK population. Many of these were mature students. The largest group was Indian (27 per cent) and the smallest Bangladeshi (three per cent). The vast majority were aged over 21, and 50 per cent over 25.

The NALS data also suggest that members of ethnic minorities are highly motivated to learn but may face more difficulties in participating as adults. NALS (1997) revealed no differences between learners and non-learners in terms of their ethnicity, although there was only limited scope to examine the data by ethnicity, as 94 per cent of the sample described themselves as being part of a white ethnic group.

The Labour Force Survey distinguishes between people born inside and outside of the UK and whether they are UK citizens. There is no discernible different participation rate between UK citizens born inside or outside of the UK, although non-UK citizens were more likely to have experienced training in the last four weeks, than UK citizens.

Labour force status

Those who are employed are much more likely than the unemployed or those 'not in the labour force' to access and participate in training. Of those classified as learners by the LFS (Winter, 1998), 16 per cent were employed, compared with only nine per cent of the unemployed cohort. NALS confirms the divide between employed and unemployed participation. Almost nine in ten full-time employees (88 per cent) and almost eight in ten part time employees (78 per cent) had taken part in a learning activity in the past three years. Conversely, less than half of the respondents that were looking after home or family, retired or incapable of work due to long-term illness, injury or disability reported any learning activity.

The 1999 NIACE Survey (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) found that around 50 per cent of employees had currently or recently taken part in learning, compared with 41 per cent of unemployed people, 30 per cent of those not working and 16 per cent of retired people.

Access to training of those in work varies little by hours worked or the nature of the contract. LFS data indicate broadly similar levels of training activity among full-time and part-time employees (as does the 1999 NIACE survey [Tuckett and Sargant, 1999], which further suggests a recent increase in learning activity among part-time workers). Temporary workers if anything are more likely to participate in training, often related to initial induction training at the start of their period of employment (DfEE, 2000). Green (1999) also argues that non-permanent and part-time employees:

> *'may be more likely to be following training courses outside their present jobs, but nevertheless related to potential future work.'*

Initial levels of education and training

Sargant *et al.* (1996) looked at participation in both formal and non-formal learning and found that those with minimum initial education were continually underrepresented in the take-up of learning activities. Similarly, in the latest NIACE survey Tuckett and Sargant (1999) found that:

> *'the age at which people leave school continues to have a dramatic impact on current and future learning.'*

The survey reveals that just over a quarter (28 per cent) of those who left full-time education at the age of 16 took part in further learning, compared with 53 per cent of those who left when they were 17 or 18, and 61 per cent of those who left after the age of 21.

According to NALS, non-learners tended to have left full-time continuous education at an earlier age than learners (mean age of 15.81 compared with 17.56). In addition, the later the respondent had stayed in initial full-time education, the more likely they were to have done some learning in the last three years. NALS also reveals a clear difference between learners and non-learners in terms of the level of qualifications they obtained on leaving full-time education. Non-learners were over twice as likely as non-learners to have left without a qualification (60 per cent, compared with 24 per cent). NALS also shows that the higher the level of qualification on leaving full-time continuous education, the more likely the respondent is to be defined as a recent learner.

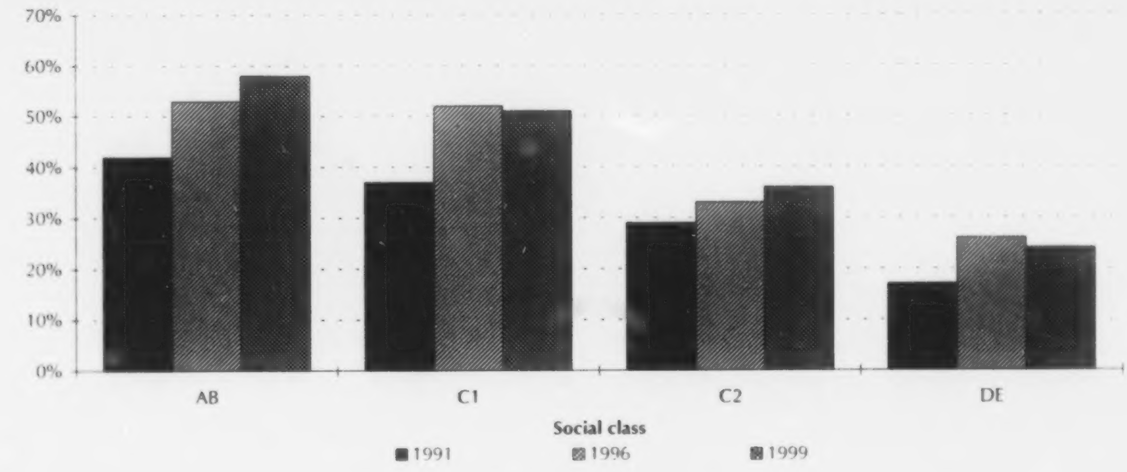
The link between skills, qualifications and initial levels of education and training is also apparent within vocational training and learning. The DfEE's *Individual Commitment to Learning* research series (Park 1994) found that learners were more likely to have completed education with some kind of qualification. Those that did not believe that they would be involved in learning activities in the future were much more likely to be current non-learners, to be manual workers, and to have left education with no qualifications. The Employment in Britain survey (1993) showed that people without educational qualifications had engaged in training considerably less frequently than those with qualifications.

Social class and occupation

The link between social class and participation in learning, clearly cannot be seen in isolation from ethnicity, levels of initial education, qualification and skills levels. Broadly, however, the link between social class, and differential access and participation in learning, is borne out by the majority of studies in this area. The following figures (from Sargant, 1991) illustrate the connection between social class and participation. In the United Kingdom:

> *'the proportion of people studying now/recently are 42 per cent of upper and middle class and 37 per cent of the lower middle class, 29 per cent of the skilled working classes and 17 per cent of the unskilled working class.'*

Figure 3.4: Participation in learning, by social class



Source: NIACE Surveys

By 1996 the overall numbers participating had increased, but social class was still a strong determining factor, a pattern repeated in the 1999 survey (see Figure 3.4).

There is a clear correlation between type of occupation (often used to define, and as an indicator of, social class) and levels of participation. NALS found that learners were more likely than non-learners to have worked in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations and were less likely to have worked in craft and related occupations or as plant and machine operatives. By using respondents' current or most recent job to classify them according to socio-economic group, it was found that learners were much more likely than non-learners to have worked in non-manual occupations. The LFS data support this link, with 16 per cent of those in managerial occupations and 29 per cent in professional occupations classed as learners, compared with just eight per cent of plant and machine operatives and seven per cent of craft workers. NIACE's 1999 survey of adult learning (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) found that three in four of those working in the least skilled occupations have done no learning in the past three years, and seven in ten of them report that they are unlikely to study in the future.

Social class disparity in participation can be seen most starkly in higher education which is still, despite all the widening participation initiatives so far, dominated by students from higher income groups.

Geographical variations

Participation varies by geographical location, reflecting as much the underlying make-up of the local population and labour market as any other regional factor. NALS reveals that respondents in the Eastern and South East regions were the most likely to have taken part in a recent learning activity (80 per cent and 78 per cent respectively). Those in Merseyside (68 per cent) and the North East (64 per cent) were the least likely to have done so. This adds further weight to the correlation between social class and differential participation levels. Merseyside and the North East are lower income areas than the East and South East of England. The LFS Winter 1998 strongly confirms this regional divide. The South East is the region with the highest levels of participation in learning activity, with 24 per cent compared to only two per cent in Merseyside.

3.5 Obstacles to participation

Non-learners are not a homogenous group. They include:

- individuals that would like to undertake learning but are unable to because of external barriers, and
- those that simply do not want to engage in learning, through lack of confidence, motivation or disaffection.

Both sets of non-learners experience barriers to participation which are different but nonetheless interrelated. For example, lack of motivation to take up learning may stem from external factors such as lack of opportunity, a perceived lack of benefit, or insufficient incentives.

Statistically we have quite a good picture of non-participation, but we know little about why some people choose to define themselves as non-learners in surveys. Although NALS used a broad definition of learning, almost a quarter of respondents claimed to have done none, and half of these said that there was nothing that could persuade them to do any learning. It may be that prior learning experiences at school and negative attitude to formal learning prevents some people from wanting to be labelled as learners.

NALS found that non-learners were generally older than learners (mean age 49 compared with 40) and included considerably more women than men. Nearly a quarter of non-learners were looking after a family or home. Considerably more women than men were non-learners. This suggests that childcare and family responsibilities remain a significant barrier to women's learning.

NALS also found that less than four non-learners in ten were in employment. Non-learners in employment were mainly engaged in craft and related occupations (18 per cent), plant and machine operatives (17 per cent), clerical and secretarial (14 per cent), personnel and protective services (12 per cent) and sales (ten per cent).

The barriers cited by non-learners usually fall into three distinct clusters:

- physical and material barriers, such as finance and time
- structural barriers around the way education and training is provided, and
- attitudinal barriers, including confidence and motivation.

3.5.1 Physical and material barriers

Financial and time barriers are the ones most frequently cited by respondents to all the participation surveys.

- **Financial constraints** — difficulties in meeting the direct costs (fees) and indirect costs (*eg* transport, books, childcare *etc.*) of learning. Of NALS respondents, 21 per cent found difficulty paying fees for courses. There are suggestions that one of the issues about cost is that non-learners do not know or value the potential financial rate of return from an investment in learning.
- **Time constraints** — a significant proportion of non-learners in NALS said that they were too busy with work (29 per cent), or family (24 per cent).

  'those adults that stay at home to look after a family are only half as likely as even the registered unemployed to have taken part in some vocational training during the previous three years.' (Calder and McCollum 1998, in Edwards *et al.* 1998)

Linked with this is:

- **lack of good and affordable childcare** — this is one of the most common reasons given by women for not engaging in learning
- **lack of information** — another frequently cited obstacle to learning. Some 20 per cent of NALS respondents cited lack of knowledge of local learning opportunities as a reason for not learning.
- **geographical isolation** — people living in isolated estates and rural areas are less likely than average to have time to participate in learning (Tremlett *et al.*, 1995). Older students (aged 25+) are more concerned with location and nearness to 'home' than are younger students in choosing to which University to apply (Connor *et al.*, 1999).

3.5.2 Structural barriers

The second set of obstacles concern the way in which learning opportunities are provided, and the lack of appropriate provision, either in terms of content or format.

- **lack of local learning opportunities** — in some areas there are few organised learning opportunities available within easy reach of people's homes, or few of a kind that people want or are able to join. People with disabilities or ill health may have particular problems in gaining access to education or training programmes.

- **availability of work-related training** — in terms of job-related training, participation may be dependent on whether an employer actually provides training and development opportunities. It is sometimes difficult for employers to find courses or qualifications that are relevant to an employee's particular learning need.
- **benefit disincentives** — the 16-hour rule and fear of losing welfare benefits has proved a significant disincentive to some unemployed people who might otherwise have entered a learning programme.

3.5.3 Attitudinal barriers

Finally, there is a set of reasons associated with attitudes to learning:

- **lack of confidence** — although not often expressed in surveys, fear of failure and individuals' lack of confidence in their ability to learn, emerge in interviews as major deterrents, with other obstacles (lack of time *etc.*) given as 'face-saving' reasons (McGivney 1990; 1999a)
- **lack of motivation** — in NALS, 39 per cent of respondents preferred to spend free time doing other things. In the IES follow-up study of older people, a similar proportion felt they had better things to do than learn (Dench and Regan, 2000) see Table 3.3 below.
- **negative attitudes to education and training** — the recent Policy Action Team (PAT) report (DfEE, 1999i) on skills argued that deep-seated cultural attitudes (perhaps emanating from negative school experiences) among non-learners led them to believe that they had nothing to gain from engagement with learning. There are also felt to be links between lack of literacy and negative attitudes to training/learning generally (DfEE 1999a).
- **peer group culture** — people who belong to social or occupational groups for whom engaging in learning is not a 'normal' or habitual activity often develop an anti-learning culture which may be difficult for individuals to go against (McGivney, 1990)
- **perceptions of irrelevance** — many non-participants cannot see what tangible benefit they might gain from engaging in learning. For example, Tamkin and Hillage (1997) looked at research carried out in relation to non-participation in vocational training. They cite a survey carried out by Rigg in 1981 of 2,500 individuals. Those disinterested in further training gave the following reasons:

Table 3.3: Reasons for not doing any learning during the previous two years, among people aged 50 to 71 (column per cent)*

	%
Time/other things to do	
I prefer to spend my free time doing things other than learning	45
Too busy to spend time learning	34
I have too many family responsibilities to do any learning	21
Learning not important	
I don't need to do any learning for any of the things I do	31
I am just not interested in doing any learning, training or education	25
No particular reason, just did not think of doing any	24
I can't see the point of doing any learning, training or education	18
Too old/done enough	
I have done enough learning in my life already	25
I feel that I am too old to learn	22
Health	
My health problems or disability make it difficult for me to learn	17
Personal barriers — financial	
I can't afford to pay the fees to go on any courses	13
I am unable to travel to any courses	12
I can't afford to buy the necessary books, equipment, etc.	8
My benefit would be cut if I did a training course	3
Other personal barriers	
I did not enjoy learning at school	12
I don't like going out alone	11
I would be worried about keeping up with others on the course	7
I don't have the qualifications needed to get on most courses	6
My family disapprove of me doing any learning	3
I have difficulties with numbers	2
I have difficulties with reading and writing	2
I have difficulties with English	1
Other barriers — external	
I want to do some learning, but can't find the opportunities locally	3
I know very little about the learning opportunities around here	3
Unweighted base	94
Weighted base	*103*

* will not add to 100 per cent as respondents could select more than one reason

Source: IES Survey, 1999

- perceptions of being too old (workers over 45)
- perceptions that training is only associated with a new job (younger workers)
- satisfaction with current task and level (manual workers)
- possession of sufficient qualifications (small number of respondents), and
- feelings of inadequacy (small number of respondents).

A survey among older learners found that a lack of time, and the belief that learning was not important were the main reasons for non-participation. Personal and external barriers (such as a lack of availability and information) were not reported so frequently (Dench and Regan, 2000).

Attitudinal barriers are the hardest to overcome. If an individual wishes to learn, solutions can often be found to some of the practical obstacles. As Dench and Regan (2000) point out, lack of time can be an indicator of a lack of interest. Some people who report lack of time as a barrier would probably make time if they thought learning was important enough. Much of the literature provides evidence which suggests that learning is often a lifelong interest.

3.6 Financing learning

A survey of adults (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) found that the majority felt that the individual and employer, rather than the taxpayer, should bear most of the funding. NALS found that most taught learning episodes required the payment of fees. Fees were most commonly paid by employers when the learning was connected with the current job, and by the learner for all other types of learning. Commonly, other costs are incurred on top of fees. In 40 per cent of cases, costs such as travel and costs of supplies and equipment were cited.

It has been found that women more frequently bear the cost of their own learning than men (McGivney, 1999a).

3.6.1 Tax Relief for Vocational Training

Since the early 1990s the government has given tax relief on payments (such as fees) for training which can count towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), or a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), Payments for GCSE or 'A' level courses do not qualify for tax relief.

Since 1996, there is an additional entitlement for people aged 30 or over to tax relief for training which does not involve NVQs, if it provides skills or knowledge which are relevant to, and intended to be used in, paid employment or self-employment.

Participation has to be on a full-time, or substantially full-time, basis for a period of at least four consecutive weeks, but no more than a year.

Individuals may also be entitled to financial support through Career Development Loans (Section 2.4.4).

3.6.2 Employer contributions

Employers make the biggest financial contribution to learning at work. The DfEE estimate that (in 1998) employers spend between £15 billion and £20 billion on training their employees.

The Industrial Society conducts regular surveys of UK employers' training budgets and spending (although the samples used are not necessarily representative). Latest data (Industrial Society, 1999) suggest that organisations spend around 1.1 per cent of their turnover on training. Spending per employee (which is notoriously difficult to calculate on a consistent basis) averaged £350 in 1999 — declining by size of organisations, with an average of £230 per head in organisations with over 2,500 employees.

Another recent survey of mainly larger UK employers (Institute of Management, 1999) indicates that on average, employers spend 4.7 per cent of their payroll on training.

Cost can be barrier to employers providing training. Keep (1999) states that:

> *'... in many sectors, SMEs find the financing and delivery of adult training problematic.'*

In a survey of small firms in 1995, 43 per cent said that the cost of training was the main factor discouraging involvement (DfEE, 1995).

Certain programmes have been designed to assist employers, and in particular, small firms, with the cost of providing their workforce with appropriate training. One such initiative is the DfEE's Small Firms Training Loans Scheme (see 2.4.4). This aims to offer small firms loans at preferential rates to cover the costs of a major upskilling. This scheme has been in operation since 1994, but the take-up has been very small. Keep (1999) asserts that employers are much more likely to invest in training for job specific skills. Small employers, in particular, may be reluctant to contribute to Individual Learning Accounts (2.4.4). Furthermore, employers are more likely to invest in and provide training for employees that they deem to be most likely to provide them with the greatest return. Therefore, employees in lower socio-economic groups and occupational groups will be less likely to receive training which has been funded by their employer. The expectation nonetheless is that new initiatives can use relatively small amounts of public money, and rely more heavily on voluntary contributions from employers and individuals.

4. Motivation of Adult Learners

The previous chapter dealt primarily with the reasons why adults fail to take up learning opportunities. This chapter examines the motivations of those who do decide to participate. Motivation has been taken to mean a willingness to learn and the reasons for actually enrolling in education and training courses. The following issues are explored:

- Why do adults learn?
- Are there categories of learners which can be identified according to their learning objectives?
- Do groups learn for different reasons?

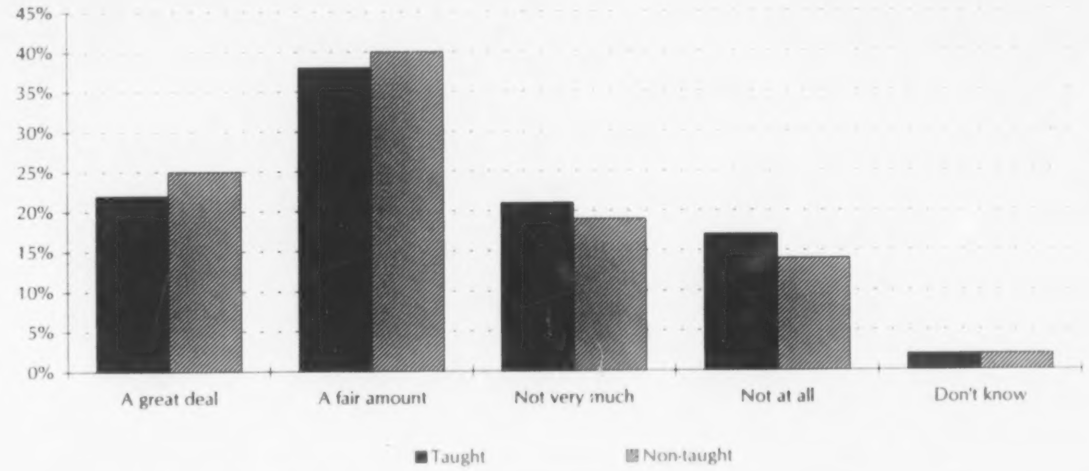
4.1 Intention to learn

A lack of motivation has been identified in the previous chapter as a key barrier to learning, that is to say, there is a group of adults that would be uninterested in learning even if the opportunity was available. Nonetheless, according to participation surveys, most people are positive about learning, think it is a 'good thing' and want to participate. Four out of five people think learning is becoming more, rather than less, important (Campaign for Learning, 1998).

The Campaign for Learning's 1998 survey found that the majority of adults possessed a positive desire to take part in either taught or non-taught learning (see Figure 4.1) in the following 12 months. This was reported to be higher than the number that wished to do so in 1996. The survey also found that many adults prefer learning new things to watching television, going to the cinema or watching sport. Despite this, only 50 per cent of respondents to the survey said that they thought that they actually would take part in learning in the coming year.

A previous survey, *the Learning Divide* (Sargant *et al.*, 1997), found a lower level of intention to learn. Less than two in five adults (38 per cent) said that they were very or fairly likely to take up any learning in the future — slightly lower than the proportion found to be currently engaged in learning. This was still a five percentage point increase compared with the previous NIACE survey carried out in 1994, although it related to respondents who had continued in full-time education to the age

Figure 4.1: Desire to learn among adults in Britain



Source: Campaign for Learning, 1998

of 18 or over. Similarly, while actual participation among manual workers is falling, more adults from the higher socio-economic groups are now planning to undertake a learning activity.

The surveys suggest that more adults from the higher socio-economic groups are now planning to undertake a learning activity, although participation among manual workers is falling. As suggested earlier, there is a strong link between motivation and educational background. People's early eaucational experiences affect attitudes towards learning, and this impacts on their motivation to learn in later life.

Work is a key factor influencing people's perception of their likelihood of learning in the future. Over half (54 per cent) of NALS respondents believed that it was fairly likely or very likely that they would take part in some *job-related* training in the next two to three years. A far lower percentage (38 per cent) believed that they would take part in any *non-job-related* training or learning. Those in work were generally very likely to believe that they would participate in some kind of vocational learning. Those who had retired were the most unlikely to be planning any future learning, and women were also less likely than men to be planning to learn.

People who are non-learners and suffer from a lack of interest in future learning do not necessarily believe that this will always be the case. Tamkin and Hillage (1997) reported that this group believed that they could develop an interest in learning if:

- their employer gave them time off
- their domestic situation were to change (particularly true of women)
- the learning were to be employer funded.

What this reveals is that even when the main problem appears to be lack of interest, this can mask other obstacles such as lack of time, caring responsibilities and a lack of money. It also highlights that there is a complex relationship between cause and effect (McGivney, 1990).

The NALS data also shed some light on the attitudes of non-learners to education and learning. What emerges is that the majority of non-learners do not necessarily view learning negatively. In some instances they even see it as being more important than learners. Significantly more non-learners than learners believed that you are more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education (Dench and Regan 2000). Non-learners are, however, more pessimistic about the difference that learning can make to them, and they often do not see it relevant to their situation. Older non-learners may, for example, believe that learning is valuable for younger people, but not for themselves.

4.1.1 The importance attached to learning

The Campaign for Learning (1998) found that the vast majority of people (90 per cent) thought learning was either very important (63 per cent) or fairly important (27 per cent). Learning was felt to improve the quality of people's lives and allow them to better themselves.

Learning at work also has a great importance for most people. More than three-quarters of people would prefer to work for an employer that supports their training than for one that pays high salaries but offers little opportunity for training (Campaign for Learning, 1998). Women are more likely than men, however, to believe that training is more important than salary increases.

Qualifications are viewed as an important learning commodity for both those undertaking vocational and those engaged in non-vocational learning. The SCPR study of attitudes to lifetime learning (Park, 1994) found that people who had been out of the labour market for a long period of time, especially women returners, believed that a recent qualification would give them 'the edge' when re-entering the labour market. Qualifications are often viewed as commensurate with status. Study towards a qualification can sometimes therefore be an end in itself. Those who feel that they should obtain paper qualifications to demonstrate their competence are sometimes not motivated to embark on education or training courses. This can be because they are busy at work or feel that they are sufficiently competent at their job anyway. Accreditation of prior learning is very important for this group of 'learners'.

4.2 Why do adults learn?

There have been various attempts to categorise different motives for adult participation in learning. Tamkin and Hillage (1997) describe how Houle (1961 in his study, *The Enquiring Mind*, University of Wisconsin) developed a classification model whereby participants could be placed in one of three categories. Where individuals were placed would depend on whether they were:

- *goal oriented* (using education as a means of fulfilling conscious objectives)
- *activity oriented* (using education as a means of escaping unsatisfactory home lives or loneliness, *etc.*)
- *learning oriented* (pursuing learning for the love of it).

Later, Sheffield (in Tamkin and Hillage, 1997) devised five rather than three categories:

- learning orientation (the same as Houle's learning orientation)
- desire-activity orientation (this corresponds to the social aspect of Houle's activity orientation)
- personal goal orientation (one aspect of Houle's goal orientation)
- societal goal orientation (the other aspect), and
- need-activity orientation (this emphasises personal rather than social needs).

The NIACE Survey (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) found that:

- 47 per cent of reasons for learning are work related
- 35 per cent of reasons relate to personal development
- 11 per cent of reasons are to gain educational qualifications/progression.

Personal development seems to be more important to older learners. The Learning Divide (Sargant *et al.*, 1997) found that a majority of older learners (61 per cent of 55 to 64 year olds) make a decision about the learning subject based on personal development. Women are also much more likely than men to be studying for interest, while men were more likely to be involved through their employment. Adults who belong to higher socio-economic groups are more likely to undertake learning for 'personal enrichment' and 'intellectual interest'. Conversely, adults from lower socio-economic groups were more likely to give 'instrumental' reasons for learning, such as 'to get ahead' (Tamkin and Hillage, 1997).

IES surveyed the reasons why older learners choose to participate in learning (Dench and Regan, 2000). The reasons were grouped into 'instrumental', 'intellectual', 'social', 'personal' and 'other'. Intellectual reasons were found to be by far the most important: 95 per cent of learners rated at least one of the reasons in this category as very or fairly important. Motivations grouped under this umbrella were:

- I wanted to generally increase my knowledge
- I wanted to keep my brain active
- I enjoy the challenge of learning new things
- I wanted to learn about something that I had always been interested in
- learning is fun
- I wanted to develop new interests.

(The relevant data from the report are set out in a table in an Appendix.)

When comparing the motivations of those aged sixty and over with those aged under 60, few significant differences were apparent. Those aged sixty and over were less likely to report work-related reasons for learning. They were also more likely to be involved in learning to keep their brain active, learn about something they were interested in, and because they needed to do something with their time.

SCPR (Park, 1994) found that some adults see work-related or on-the-job training as the best way to learn necessary skills. On-the-job training was thought to be a particularly effective way to learn. Vocational learning can also be a method for career advancement and earning 'brownie points'. Another reason given for taking part in courses provided by the employer in the employer's time, is that they provide an opportunity to escape from normal work routine.

4.2.1 National Adult Learning Survey data

NALS examines different types of learning (taught and non-taught learning) and then explores why individuals have decided to participate in this learning. These types of learning, and the reasons why adults have participated, are set out below:

Why participate in taught learning?

In almost half of all job-related learning episodes (45 per cent) the learning was compulsory and had usually been required by the employer. Where there was no element of compulsion, 69 per cent stated that they had undertaken the learning to acquire new skills for their current job. Half, 53 per cent, stated that the learning was for career development purposes, and 39 per cent of respondents hoped to gain more satisfaction out of his or her work as a result. Where the employer had not provided or paid for the learning, reasons for involvement were slightly different. Unsupported learning was more likely to have been undertaken for the purposes of career development, changing to a different type of work, getting a pay rise or a new job.

Turning to the results in more detail:

- **Taught learning done with future work in mind** — 48 per cent of respondents had taken up learning with future work in mind in order to develop their career, and 47 per cent were taken up to secure a new job. About one in three (36 per cent) were involved in this type of taught learning with a view to changing to a different type of work. Other supplementary reasons were also given: 69 per cent of respondents were involved in the learning in order to improve their knowledge or ability in the subject, and 45 per cent stated that they had wanted to do something interesting.
- **Taught learning done with voluntary work in mind** — for this type of learning the majority of episodes (69 per cent) had been undertaken in order to improve knowledge or ability in a subject: 37 per cent of learners wanted to do something interesting; 23 per cent had been curious about the subject. For a not insignificant amount of learners (21 per cent), the purpose of the episode was social, *ie* to meet new people.
- **Taught learning with no initial work connection but with a potential impact on working life** — the most common reason given by respondents for undertaking this type of learning was to improve knowledge or ability in the subject (62 per cent). Almost half of the respondents (45 per cent) stated that they wanted to do something interesting; around one in three (33 per cent) had been curious about the subject and 18 per cent had undertaken the learning in order to meet new people.
- **Taught learning with no work connection** — a comparable pattern was present for this type of learning. 60 per cent of these learning episodes had been undertaken to improve knowledge or ability in the subject: 50 per cent of learners had wanted to do something interesting. 27 per cent (about one in four) had been curious about the subject and 21 per cent had wanted to meet new people.

Motives for non-taught learning

Non-taught learning relates to self-taught learning which may or may not be work-related. That said, over half of those interviewed had embarked on a self-taught qualification for a job-related reason:

- to give them new skills for the job they were doing at the time (37 per cent)
- to develop their career (32 per cent), and
- to get more satisfaction out of their work (29 per cent).

A very high proportion (81 per cent) stated that they had undertaken self-taught learning in order to improve their knowledge or ability in the subject. Some 44 per cent had been curious about the subject and 41 per cent had wanted to do something interesting.

4.2.2 Reasons for learning, from the Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey only gives information on the reasons why adults undertake job-related training (both on-the-job and training away from the job). Two reasons only are provided: to improve skills for the same type of work; and to learn skills for a different type of work. The vast majority (87 per cent) of adults participating in some kind of on-the-job training are involved in order to improve their skills for the same type of work. This compares with only ten per cent involved in order to learn skills for a different type of work. The gap is slightly less pronounced for training away from the job. Nonetheless, 70 per cent participate in off-the-job training to improve skills for the same type of work, compared to 26 per cent to learn skills for a different type of work.

4.3 Influences on participation

Discovering what has influenced adults in their decisions to participate sheds light on why some groups appear more motivated to take part in learning than others.

The workplace seems to exert a powerful influence on adults. Thirty-four per cent of adults consulted in the Attitudes to Learning Survey (Campaign for Learning, 1998) believed that their employer or colleagues are the most likely to influence them to start learning. The NIACE survey on adult participation (Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) also found that, for those aged between 25 and 64, workplace trainers and employers were the most common source of advice on learning. Unemployed adults do not have access, therefore, to the influences available to those in work.

After influences at work, friends and relatives are the most important 'influencers' in terms of motivations and non-motivations to learn.

Recent experiences of learning also have a bearing on the likelihood of future learning. The Learning Divide (Sargant *et al.*, 1997) clearly illustrates this by revealing that nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of current learners and 59 per cent of recent learners are likely to learn in the next three years, compared with 26 per cent of past learners and 13 per cent of non-learners.

5. Learning Needs and Provision

In this section we consider what is known about adult skill levels and needs. We also look at the training and skills of those who have the responsibility of teaching adults, including the use of open and distance learning.

There was a general move in the 1990s away from the more demand-led, market-based provision of earlier decades, towards assessing need and stimulating demand. This is especially marked in the Further Education sector which has seen significant growth, and become a focus of public policy attention since the passage of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act.

5.1 Skill levels

The prime motivation for concern over the skill levels of the workforce and of the population as a whole is economic, though recent developments, and longstanding concerns of adult educators, focus also on the consequences of low skill levels in family, community and personal contexts.

In the economic sphere the National Skills Task Force (DfEE, 1999c) has distinguished between:

- **skill shortages** — where there is a genuine lack of adequately skilled individuals available in the accessible labour market and
- **skill gaps** — where employers feel that their existing workforce have lower skill levels than necessary.

The Task Force goes on to argue that skill gaps may not, for a period of time, be visible to employers, for a variety of historical reasons or reasons to do with the familiarity and acceptability of certain working practices and environments. These gaps may only show up in the longer term, when international skill and productivity comparisons are made and force them to be acknowledged.

The Task Force distinguished three types of skill needs:

- **generic skills** — the transferable skills which can be used across occupational groups. These include what have already been defined as Key Skills (see below). However, and reflecting the views of many employers, 'generic skills' also covers reasoning skills (scheduling work and diagnosing work problems), work process management skills (visualising output, working backwards for planning purposes), and personal values and attitudes such as motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership and initiative.

- **vocational skills** — *ie* the specific 'technical' skills needed to work within an occupation or occupational group. They are considered essential for undertaking standard occupational tasks, and will often be those capabilities described within Occupational Standards (where they exist) developed and published by National Training Organisations. Some vocational skills included in Occupational Standards (*eg* foreign language skills, computer programming skills) may also be transferable across occupations.
- **job-specific skills** — which might include local functional skills (*eg* operating specific pieces of equipment) or employer-wide skills (*eg* in-company quality standards or specific working methodologies).

There has been considerable progress in recent years in raising the skill levels of the UK's population as a whole, using qualifications as a proxy for skills. Between 1985 and 1997 the proportion of the workforce holding any qualification at all rose from 60 per cent to 87 per cent. However, in craft occupations the figures remain low, at 17 per cent overall holding no qualification and concentrations of 22 per cent, 27 per cent and 42 per cent in construction, food preparation and textiles. These figures are, significantly, poor when compared with those for France and Germany.

The Task Force's Second Report (DfEE, 1999c) argues that the huge amount of data which does exist is in an incoherent and inconsistent form, and recommended a boosted LFS survey.

The National Targets, one aspect of the government's response to acknowledged skills gaps, remain modest:

	Current (Spring 1998)	**2002 Target**
Adults with Level 3 Qualification	42 per cent	50 per cent
Adults with Level 4 Qualification	25 per cent	28 per cent

The National Skills Task Force was also asked to consider the longer-term skill needs of the economy. It found itself agreeing with those who have argued (in the debate over what constitutes 'useful learning') that general, basic, transferable skills are what can best be inculcated now to meet unknown future circumstances:

Table 5.1: Literacy and numeracy levels in Great Britain (per cent)[1]

Skills level	Literacy	Numeracy
Very low	6	23
Low	13	25
Average	38	25
Good	43	27
n (total no. of cases)	*1,711*	*1,702*

Source: It Doesn't Get Any Better (Byner and Parsons, 1997)

> *'We are clear that we must do more than ensure that businesses have the skills required for their current operations. The economy is dynamic and the skills of the workforce need to encourage innovation and growth rather than simply react to it. ... We think it would be a mistake to treat the current demands of employers and individuals as coterminous with the needs of the economy.'*
>
> NSTF second report (DfEE, 1999c)

5.1.1 Basic skills

The Moser Report, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start* (DfEE, 1999a) outlines the current position of Basic Skills levels in the population:

> *'About six per cent of the adult working population are judged to have "very low" literacy skills; and a further 13 per cent to have "low" literacy skills. Those with "very low" skills are likely to have great difficulty with any reading, struggling to read the shortest and simplest texts, though they may be able to cope with simple signs and advertisements especially when those are illustrated. Those with "low" literacy skills may be able to read a short article from a tabloid newspaper and pick out favourite programmes from a TV guide, but may read slowly with little understanding. Problems with numeracy are even more common than with literacy. Some researchers suggest that nearly half of all adults in Britain have numeracy skills below the level expected of all 11 year olds.'*

Table 5.1, above, presents data from a Basic Skills Agency report and relates to adults at age 37. While around one in five adults have low or very low literacy skills, almost half have low or very low levels of numeracy.

There is a strong correlation between low levels of literacy and numeracy and the lack of qualifications (Table 5.2), with 46 per cent of men and 45 per cent of women with very low literacy having no qualifications. There is a less marked, but still significant relationship between low levels of numeracy and the lack of qualifications.

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[1] The findings are based on a group of 17,000 people born in one week in 1958, from which a representative sample of 2,144 cohort members were taken at age 37.

Table 5.2: People in Great Britain with no qualifications, by levels of literacy and numeracy (per cent)

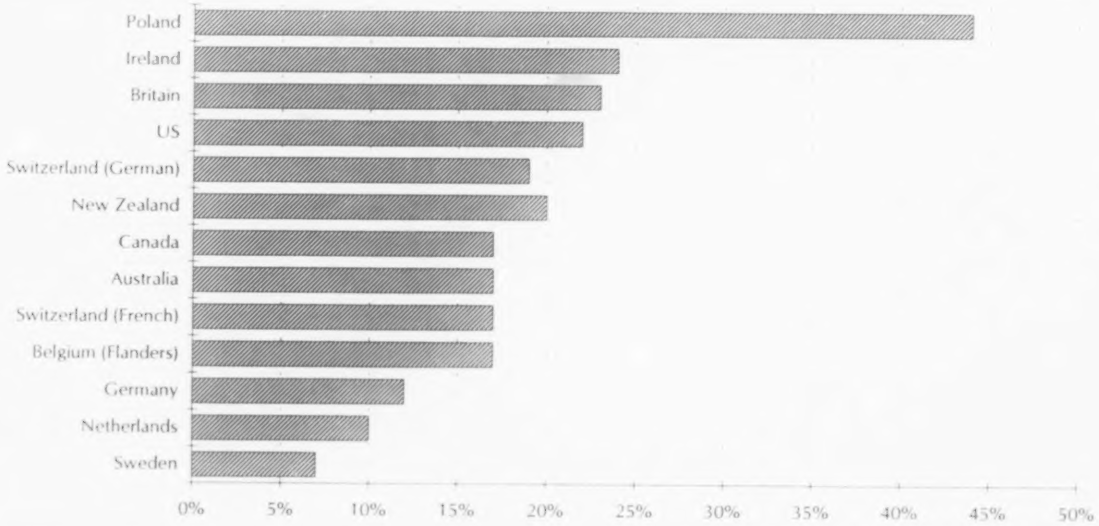
	Men	Women
Literacy		
Very low	46	45
Low	11	17
Average	10	8
Good	4	1
Numeracy		
Very low	31	23
Low	10	8
Average	3	3
Good	2	1

Source: : It Doesn't Get Any Better (Byner and Parsons, 1997)

It is clear from the references in *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) and elsewhere, that the UK government is acutely aware of and deeply concerned about the skills gap between the UK and other industrialised countries. Moser uses figures from the OECD study (OECD, 1997) to illustrate this in the area of basic skills (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

In *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) the government committed itself to a National Target for increasing adult participation in basic skills programmes to 500,000 per annum by the year 2002, a doubling of those currently estimated to be taking part in relevant courses of study. As part of that, the Ufi (see Chapter 2)

Figure 5.1: Percentage of adults with literacy skills at the lowest level



Source: Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, OECD, 1997

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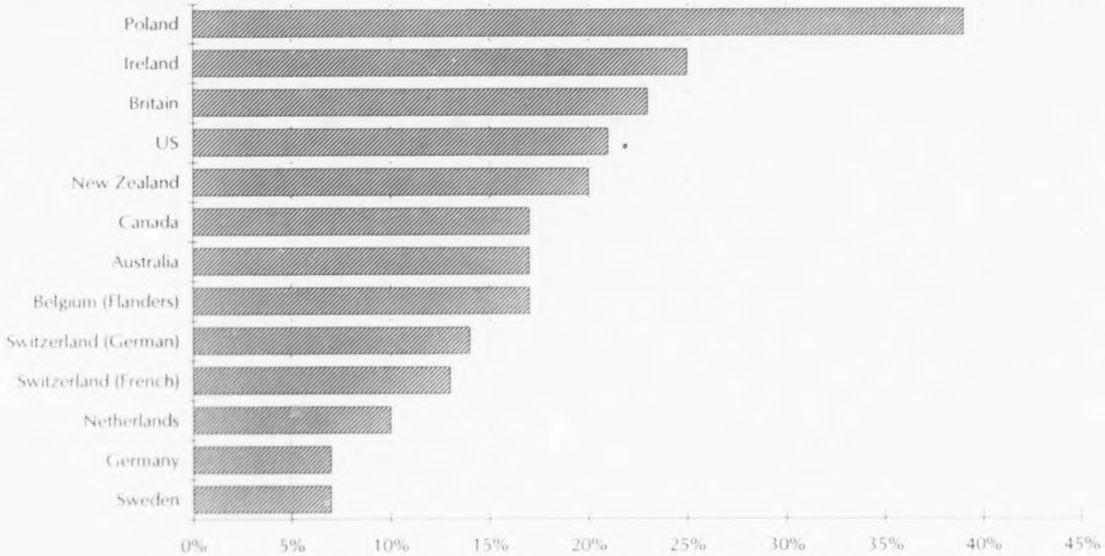
Figure 5.2: Percentage of adults with numeracy skills at the lowest level



Source: Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, OECD, 1997

has a target to provide support for 200,000 adults with basic skills over three years.

In response to the Moser Report (DfEE, 1999a) the government has committed itself to tackling the high number of adults with low levels of basic skills. Additional funding and a number of initiatives were announced on 5 November 1999. The full strategy, including national targets for reducing the number of adults with poor basic skills, will be announced in 2000. The targets recommended in the Moser Report are set out in Table 5.3.

The Policy Action Team Report on skills (DfEE, 1999i), highlighted the 'devastating' effect that poor basic skills can have on the quality of people's lives, as well as their prospects in the labour market. The report concluded that:

> *'... learning delivered at the very local level in a way that is directly relevant to people's needs can have benefits above and beyond any improvement in skills for individuals. Where learning* really *engages*

Table 5.3: Proposed Basic Skill targets for 2005 and 2010 (percentages)

	Now	2005	2010
Literacy			
All adults	80	84	90
People aged 19	83	90	95
Numeracy			
All adults	60	64	70
People aged 19	60	85	90

Source: A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy (DfEE, 1999a)

> *people's interests, it can have a pivotal role in helping communities to cohere, to identify what they have in common in terms of both needs and opportunities, and to work together. We have therefore placed a strong emphasis in our work on the importance of developing local capacity, which is simultaneously a pre-condition for and an important outcome from effective learning in local communities.'*

5.1.2 Key skills

In recent years much attention has been paid to the concept of key skills, beyond basic literacy and numeracy and which are useful across occupational groups. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) developed a specification for key skills important both at work and in life more generally, which has gained fairly general acceptance, including among employers surveyed. These are:

- communication
- application of number
- information technology
- working with others
- improving own learning and performance
- problem solving.

In addition to these generic skills, employers also express concern about deficiencies in the areas of customer handling skills, technical and practical skills and management skills (IFF, 1998). Apart from the latter, most of these skill deficiencies are generally identified to be at a fairly low or intermediate level.

While it is difficult but not impossible to conceive of ways, through the qualifications system for example, of gaining key skills assessment information for young people, there is considerably more difficulty in doing this for adults. The government has said that it would take advice on a National Target for key skills for adults 'once a practical and robust measure of key skills attainment exists'.

Thus it is clear from all the evidence that there is a skills problem in England and that it lies at the levels of basic skills, key skills (whether narrowly or more widely defined) and at intermediate levels. *The Learning Age* summarised the position (DfEE, 1998i):

> *'Our weakness lies in our performance in basic and intermediate skills. Almost 30 per cent of young people fail to reach NVQ level 2 by the age of 19. Seven million adults have no formal qualifications at all; 21 million adults have not reached NVQ level 3; and more than one in five of all adults have poor literacy skills, putting the UK ninth in a recent international survey of 12 industrial countries.*
>
> *'A great strength is our universities which educate to degree and post graduate level and set world class standards. The UK is second only to the USA in the number of major scientific prizes awarded in the*

> *last five years. The proportion of graduates in the working population has almost doubled over a decade. Our research excellence is valued by many companies which choose to base their research capacity in the UK.'*

Other learning needs highlighted in recent reports include learning for citizenship, community capacity-building, parenting, the environment and other issues.

5.2 Teaching adult learners

As we saw in the earlier chapters, adult learning takes place in a variety of settings including the workplace, further and higher educational institutions and in private training providers' premises. Relatively little is known about the private sector training providers. More is known about the form and nature of further and higher education provision, and we begin by examining the development of adult trainers and educators in further education.

Historically, there were two main training routes for those intending to teach post-16 students: one developed for those (almost entirely part-time) teachers intending to work in local authority and voluntary body adult education services, and one for those intending to work, part-time or full-time, in the more traditionally conceived 16-19 further education service.

The dramatically changed age profile of students in the post-16 sector has had similarly dramatic effects on the way teaching and learning are organised and on the way training of teachers is arranged and delivered.

In its publication, *Professional Development in Further Education* (FEFC, 1999b) the Further Education Funding Council's Inspectorate writes:

> *'Greater flexibility in the organisation of learning programmes has led to students spending more time studying on their own, using learning centres, open-access computer facilities or assessment centres. Support staff have an important role to play in these new-style learning environments. Saturday colleges and roll-on roll-off programmes have created their own demands for flexibly deployed, multi-skilled staff. The teacher as the facilitator of learning is using very different skills from those of the traditional lecturer. Students range from those with severe learning difficulties to those following graduate or professional courses, all of whom require and expect some recognition of their personal learning needs.*
>
> *'Colleges are attempting to respond to the demands to widen access and increase participation which are expressed in* Inclusive Learning, *the report of the learning difficulties and/or disabilities committee, chaired by Professor Tomlinson, and in* Learning Works, *the report of the widening participation committee, chaired by Helena Kennedy QC. Successful initiatives mean that teachers must cater for an increasing range of needs and abilities, not only within the college*

> *but often within individual classes. The FEFC has funded an inclusive learning quality improvement initiative, with £3 million allocated so far to its first two years of work. This is to improve understanding of how learning takes place, and how the learning needs of a more diverse student body can be met.'*

As early as 1990, when it became clear that adult learning needs were being increasingly met by Further Education Colleges, NIACE and the then Department of Employment co-operated in a joint project and publication *'Opening Colleges to Adult Learners'* (McGivney (ed.), 1992). This attempted to cover the whole range of issues which arise when institutions accept a change of primary purpose from meeting the vocational learning needs of 16-19 year olds to meeting a wide range of learning needs for their local post-16 community.

5.2.1 Staff training and development

By 1999 the Inspectorate was saying that, on the basis of inspections, many colleges were providing some effective support for their changing clientele (FEFC, 1999b).

> *'The best colleges are providing effective training for teachers' methods and methods of assessment to help them adapt and refine their teaching. There is also evidence of good curriculum planning, organisation and management, designed to structure the curriculum in ways which are more appropriate to adult learners.'*

However the Inspectorate did note that while the training needs of those specifically working with students with learning difficulties had been addressed,

> *'... training for other teachers to help them to deal effectively with the wide range of ability and differing learning needs remains inadequate in a number of colleges. Increased numbers of students make demands which are not always met. In many cases, staff are asked to take on roles and tasks for which they do not have sufficient expertise. Many staff are unaware of the particular learning needs of many of the students now being attracted into further education. This results in shortcomings in support strategies, or uncertainty about how to devise strategies to help such students.*
>
> *'In response to the widening participation agenda, some colleges are developing more foundation level programmes and more modular courses. The better colleges are offering in-house courses to prepare teachers for these changes. As part of the quality initiative on inclusive learning, some are devoting staff development days to improving classroom practice and managing students with different ability levels.'*
>
> (FEFC, 1999b)

Some of what the report calls the 'better' colleges are preparing their staff to cope with these changes brought about by 'inclusive learning'. By implication, however, most are not.

It is not compulsory for further education teachers to have qualified teacher status. However, the majority of teachers who work in the sector hold one or more of the varied teaching qualifications which currently exist. The proportion of full-time staff with teaching qualifications, as recorded in FEFC college inspection reports, 1993-94 to 1996-97, ranged from 76 per cent to 100 per cent (FEFC, 1999b). Qualifications are generally either a degree or certificate in education from a higher education institution (which generally qualifies the holder to teach in a primary or secondary school) or a further education teacher certificate. The latter does not confer qualified teacher status. The City and Guilds of London Institute offer such a certificate, with over 10,000 candidates a year drawn not only from teachers in further education, but also from a other professions which require trainers.

The Moser Report (DfEE, 1999a) noted the importance of training for teachers of basic skills:

> *'Training is crucial. There is evidence that programmes using well-trained staff, who receive regular professional up-dating, achieve the best outcomes in terms of learners achievements.*[1] *As noted in an earlier chapter, the FEFC's recent report on Programme Area 10 has commented on this problem, suggesting that basic education staff frequently have no relevant qualification for the area in which they teach.*
>
> *'Staff working in specific contexts should be trained specifically for these contexts. For example, in programmes for unemployed people, a vocational focus is crucial. Staff must be able to analyse jobs into their component tasks, identifying the literacy and numeracy requirements. In the case of foundational training or dedicated provision, staff may need to acquire familiarity with a wide range of job tasks, in order to keep work related literacy and numeracy demands at the centre. Similarly, staff providing training at the workplace require the skills needed to teach basic skills in that particular context.'*
>
> *A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy* (DfEE, 1999a)

It also noted that there might be more of a problem here than in some other areas:

> *'Most teachers in the programme area are conscientious and committed to their work. Many provide good levels of tutorial support and guidance for their students. They do not all have sufficient specialist expertise and some lack appropriate teaching qualifications.'*

And proposed radical steps:

> *'The solution is to develop more demanding initial training as a compulsory preparation for new staff and volunteers in adult programmes. The BSA and the new Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) should work together to produce*

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[1] Including targets for the percentage of need served by a programme, retention, progress and positive outcomes.

such qualifications, in collaboration with the national awarding bodies. We would also like to see diploma courses established in University Education Departments.'

A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy (DfEE, 1999a)

The CGLI 730 series now incorporates the theory and practice of adult teaching and learning in its Further and Adult Education Teaching Certificate, to such an extent that there is little need any longer for a separate, specifically adult, qualification. Of the 10,000 people going through the certificate in any one year, a little over 6,000 (in 1997/98 and 1998/99) described themselves as FE teachers. Others are drawn from the other parts of the adult education world and from spheres like driving instructors and nurse tutors.

There is, however, a perceived need for slightly different qualifications for those engaged in teaching and learning in community settings. A lead body, parallel to FENTO (see 2.2.14) named PAOLO, is in the process of being established.

Similarly ENTO (formerly known as the Training and Development Lead Body) has developed a comprehensive set of standards and qualifications designed specifically for practitioners in work-based training.

Information on the skills and qualifications of people who deliver or support work-based training is very patchy. In his annual report, the TSC Chief Inspector said of work-based training that whilst most trainers were competent in the occupations they were teaching, many were unqualified as instructors and lacked the techniques to hold trainees' attention. The Skills Task Force has identified similar problems, and in its second report it recommends that within five years all workplace training staff instructing Modern Apprentices should be required to hold appropriate qualifications as trainers.

The numbers of people wholly or mainly engaged in delivering work-based training in the UK appears to be between 70,000 — 100,000. The figure is not precise because it is derived from statistics collected for other purposes (no estimate even is available separately for England).

Of the estimated £12bn volume of work-based training each year, government funded training contributes about ten per cent.

DfEE used to be directly responsible for training work-based trainers in generic training skills. This was delivered through a national network of Accredited Training Centres (ATCs), with an annual budget in excess of £15m towards the end of the 1980s. Responsibility was passed to TECs in the early 1990s, and the budget was built into the TEC funding model, but not separately identified. TECs were required to have strategies for trainer training, and DfEE issued good practice guidance. This expects

TECs to produce detailed plans and to monitor their implementation.

In March 1999 the TEC National Council (TNC) conducted a survey on 'Current Practice in Trainer Training'. Sixty of the seventy two English TECs responded. It is clear from their responses that TECs do not know what skills or qualifications their providers' staff have. Key findings were that, of the TECs that responded:

- less than one-third had a written policy on trainer training. There was no consistent delivery method, pattern or standard.
- just over half had a budget for trainer training. Only ten spent more than £50k in 1998-99, but two spent more than £200k.
- nearly all required suppliers to be accredited with the relevant awarding bodies, but less than one-third required suppliers' staff to have at least some training and development qualifications
- over half said that they did not require suppliers working with special needs or pre-vocational training groups to have additional qualifications.

As a first step to addressing these issues, the planning guidance to TECs for the September 1999 contracting round required them to include in their local delivery plans, action plans on strengthening the skills of local trainers.

The government is committed (see *Learning to Succeed*) to improving the quality of government-funded work-based training by improving the skills and qualifications of those who deliver it. It also wishes to see higher standards in all work-based training. Developments are at an early stage but are expected to take the form of:

- inserting appropriate conditions into government contracts and attaching conditions to funding, grants and subsidies
- encouraging improved standards in non-publicly funded training, through setting standards in its own training which the private sectors will wish to follow, and making 'kite-marking' available and desirable.

5.3 Open and distance learning

A particular feature of adult learning methods in England is open and distance learning which have been extensively used in adult learning contexts in England for many years. This has led to the development of a complex 'industry' comprised of universities, colleges, large corporate bodies and small commercial organisations.

The Open University (see 2.2.16) is only the most obviously successful of the players and the current drive, through the National Grid for Learning (see 2.4.4) and other initiatives, to introduce vastly greater numbers of people to the possibilities of ICT based learning, will increase the weight of this sector (though in so far unpredictable ways).

Taking a broad view of what constitutes open learning, there are probably 20-25,000 commercially available packages of which 5,000 are computer-based. At present the material being developed is about equally divided between computer-based and text-based materials. In many cases, computer-based materials also include other media in the 'package'. The media commonly in use include paper-based, audio cassette, video, computer-based and combinations of these. The great majority of packs remain those based on written materials, but that is changing.

The open learning market is complex, with some sectors (vocational training for example) being more mature, resulting in an unevenness of subject availability. This operation of market forces leads to a wide availability of resources where there is a consistent high demand (*eg* languages), or a market willing and able to pay highly for the 'right' package (*eg* management training), or both (*eg* information technology). There is a limited availability of learning materials for basic skills students.

The growing interest in the use of on-line methods to deliver and support learning is growing in most market sectors. Many commercial companies are interested in these developments alongside the university and college sectors. There will be significant training implications as all teachers and trainers (not just enthusiasts) are encouraged or even required to adopt such methods. The government has acknowledged this and proposals are being made to meet the training demand.

6. Moves to Widen Participation

In this chapter we consider the different measures that have been taken to widen participation, and their implications.

The history of adult education as a 'movement' and the social purposes which have often motivated its practitioners, means that there has always been a drive, at least on the part of some, to bring into education and training the 'missing groups'. Voluntary or publicly supported campaigns to meet the needs of those lacking literacy and numeracy skills, or to bring in the unemployed, to make special provision for women, for minority ethnic groups and for those with learning difficulties, exemplify this.

A great weakness of all of this has been the relative marginalisation in the past of these special attempts to widen the scope of participation. In the meantime, mainstream institutions have continued, even when they have been expanding (*ie* increasing participation), to provide in their traditional ways for those who wished to participate. Specially funded, time limited projects were often allowed to demonstrate success and then expire.

As suggested in Chapter 1, the remit given to the Further Education Funding Council by the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) had far reaching effects. These were felt within the expanding and changing FE sector, and in parallel or consequential developments in Higher Education. They were also felt in Local Authority adult education and in the TECs and NTOs, and even in private training bodies taking a lead from FE and/or from the growing government push to widen participation.

6.1 Widening participation in further and adult education

The Further Education sector in England has now become both the main vehicle for bringing learning to previously excluded groups, and the best example of a coming together of the aspirations of adult educators (the 'social purpose' perspective). It carries far-reaching 'top-down' policy initiatives which have the potential to reverse the short-life, project- and campaign-focused approach. The recently published Learning and Skills Bill will, when enacted, have the result of consolidating many of the varied traditions and modes of delivery within a single, unifying Council and a single funding stream.

Two of the main tenets put forward in the report, *Learning Works* (FEFC, 1997b) were:

- that funding is the most important lever for change
- that the knowledge and skills needed to widen participation already exist.

On the question of funding, the report argued both that the total amount available to Further Education should be increased *and* that a system should be adopted which recompensed providers for the additional costs known to be incurred in providing for students from the previously excluded groups, *ie* that funds should be *re-distributed* towards them.

The committee accepted the evidence of all participation surveys that there is a close correlation between early school leaving/ lack of qualifications and those in lower socio-economic groups, and lack of participation in education and training after school. The committee recommended, and the Funding Council accepted that, while it was possible realistically to use the lack of early educational success as a criterion for identifying non-participating young people, for adults it would be more useful to adopt a 'class' or 'poverty' criterion.

The method adopted for adults is to add a 'widening participation factor' to the Council's Funding methodology for students from the most deprived areas of the country, and to reward colleges for recruiting and retaining such students.

This is implemented by the use of the Department of the Environment index of local conditions, which measures the relative deprivation of local authority wards. Each student is assigned to a ward on the basis of their postcode. The FEFC set a threshold on the definition of such students — in the first year of operation for example, additional 'widening participation' funding applied to the 15 per cent most deprived wards in England. The 'eligible' students represented about 25 per cent of all students in England. Additional funding units are allocated to students enrolled from the areas concerned, and the amount of this 'uplift' increases with the relative deprivation of the student. The FEFC suggests that colleges incur additional costs of about ten per cent in respect of these students. The additional funding is designed 'to reflect the additional resources required to recruit and retain the students'.

The government has accepted both these 'strategic' arguments about funding, as is clearly set out in the *Departmental Report: The Government's Expenditure Plans 1999/20-2001/02* (DfEE, 1999f):

> *'The Government has announced major additional funding in FE totalling £725 million over the next two years, reflecting the central*

> *position the sector has to play in the national agenda to promote employability and social inclusion.'*

This was then increased by a further £365m announced in November 1999, bringing the total funding for FE colleges to nearly £3.9 billion in 2001-02, a 7.7 per cent increase in real terms over 2000-01 and a 16 per cent increase in real terms over 1998-99.

In all the relevant announcements the government continues to make clear the importance it attaches to adult students and to widening participation:

> *'The principles of* Learning Works *are central to the Department's key objective to encourage people to learn throughout their lives to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding to improve their employability in a changing labour market. Along with the recommendations in the Tomlinson report on provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (see below), they are also central to the Government's national agenda to tackle social exclusion. The FE sector has considerable diversity and flexibility and is well placed to meet the challenge of engaging and catering for disadvantage learners. The major expansion of some 700,000 students, for which the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement will have provided by 2001/02, will be focused principally on widening participation — building on the significant numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and who face barriers to lifelong learning.*
>
> *'The extra funding will also serve as a platform for a drive to widen participation amongst adults, mainly drawn from those (some two-thirds of the projected increase) whose background has disadvantaged them. The Department hopes the FEFC will continue to refine the current postcode-based means of identifying such students.*
>
> *'In recognition of the additional costs for colleges in widening participation, the FEFC has been invited to fund by 2001/02, from sums available for participation, a widening participation factor on the basis of an average ten per cent premium per relevant student.*
>
> *'The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 places a duty on the FEFC to have regard for the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities when determining what provision to make available.*
>
> *'The great majority of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend sector colleges. Colleges may claim additional support through the FEFC's funding methodology for these students.*
>
> *'Since the publication of Inclusive Learning, the report of the FEFC's Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee under Professor John Tomlinson, the FEFC has supported a staff development programme aimed at assisting colleges in implementing the Committee's recommendations. This programme is to improve management, teaching and support systems and build a framework for inclusive learning. The FEFC has committed £5 million over three years to this work.'*
>
> (DfEE, 1999f)

The barriers to adult participation in learning, and ways of removing or overcoming those barriers have been extensively documented over the years, especially by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. In their evidence to the Kennedy Committee (see Uden, 1996) NIACE argued that knowledge of how to widen participation already existed, and this was taken up in *Learning Works* in the Chapter 'We Know How to Widen Participation — Now We Need to Make it Happen'.

The Further Education Funding Council took up the challenge, not only by changes to the funding methodology (see above) but by commissioning and publishing the studies: *Identifying and Addressing Needs: A Practical Guide* and *How to Widen Participation: A Guide to Good Practice.* As their titles suggest, these were practical guides to meeting the challenges now being set.

There is no space in this short study to do justice to these publications and others which have followed, but essentially providers are being asked to profile their communities, to audit their current student bodies and to consider the match/ mismatch between them. They are concerned, as was the Kennedy Report, not only with recruitment but with retention, progression and achievement *and* with levelling the playing field for all potential learners. A study of Merseyside for example revealed that, while recruitment of women was higher than that of men, many women failed to progress beyond level one. The study, therefore, recommended that a target be set for women achieving at level three. The same study profiled participation not only in the FE colleges but, as far as possible, all other providers, and two of its recommendations were that a permanent database of participation should be maintained, extended and updated annually, and that a study of learning at work on Merseyside should be undertaken.

The Merseyside study was only one of many being undertaken by colleges, groups of colleges and wider partnerships of providers taking seriously the challenge of widening participation.

6.2 Widening participation in higher education

Similar trends to those in further education are apparent in the higher education sector where, by the 1997/98 academic year, not only were adults a majority of students overall, but 36.7 per cent of first year degree students were aged 25 and over. (HESA 1998).

For the first time in 1999 'league tables' were published showing the relative success of universities in recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, a range of measures have been introduced to boost participation. Some of these are specifically targeted at older students; others, though not exclusively focused on the 25+ age group, may significantly improve the prospects of adult learners:

- In 1999/2000 the Higher Education Funding Council gave HE institutions £30m a year to use on wider participation initiatives to widen the social profile of entry into higher education.
- Many mature students prefer to study on a part-time basis for financial and domestic reasons, combining their studies with work or raising a family. £12 million has been allocated for the 1999/2000 academic year to enable fees to be waived for those starting part-time courses who are in receipt of benefits, or who lose their job during the course of their studies. Similar amounts will be made available for following years.
- From September 2000, loans for part-time students will be available to part-time students on low incomes to help with the costs of study. They will be entitled to a loan of at least £500. Part-time provision is particularly important in opening up access to employees.
- A five per cent premium in respect of mature students and those studying on a part-time basis is paid to higher education institutions to recognise the extra support and flexibility that these students might need when returning to an academic way of life.
- Higher education institutions can spend up to ten per cent of their access funds budgets on bursaries to help students who could not otherwise afford to enter higher education.

6.3 Conclusions

As the statistics provided in Chapter 2 show, and many of the cited research studies confirm, many groups and individuals remain excluded from education and training. There is still a tendency in some institutions to favour notions of education and training developed to meet the needs of students of a certain age (young), from certain backgrounds (middle class), studying in certain modes (full time, three terms a year) leaving adult learners to fit themselves around those patterns. At work, the most skilled continue to receive the most training.

Nevertheless, the views of those who have argued the case for the excluded seem to have prevailed at a number of levels, not least that of government. Attempts to assess the learning needs of communities are now being made. Funding regimes and learning structures no longer seem designed to exclude adult learners but, more and more, to meet their needs.

7. Returns from Learning

The focus of this chapter is on the returns from adult learning. It therefore considers the actual and perceived benefits of learning, the value of learning and why it is thought (or not thought) to be a valuable investment. We look at the available evidence on the financial returns to individuals and employers, as well as the wider benefits. We also briefly review available evaluations of some initiatives outlined in Chapter 1.

There is a general consensus in policy circles that learning is a good thing. The National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) has produced leaflets for employers and individuals which argue that:

> *'Learning pays for individuals; it pays for companies and it pays for nations. And, it also pays for local economies and local communities. The fact is that there is a clear link between educational success and economic success.'* (NACETT, 1999)

7.1 Returns to individuals

The Learning Age (DfEE, 1998i) presents the benefits of learning to individuals in both a cultural/societal and economic sense. It states:

> *'learning offers excitement and the opportunity for discovery. It stimulates enquiring minds and nourishes our souls. It takes us into directions we never expected, sometimes changing our lives. Learning helps create and sustain our culture. It helps all of us improve our chances of getting a job and getting on. Learning increases our earning power, helps older people to stay healthy and active, strengthens families and the wider community and encourages independence ...'*

The survey evidence suggests that individuals too define the benefits of participating in further learning fairly broadly, and the benefits are perceived to be largely intellectual or intrinsic, rather than economic or extrinsic.

The National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) examined the perceived benefits of learning by individuals. The most commonly identified benefits from 'taught learning' were:

- an improvement of knowledge (64 per cent of taught learning episodes)
- finding the learning interesting (61 per cent)
- learning new skills (59 per cent)
- enjoyment (55 per cent)
- meeting new friends (35 per cent)
- boosting self-confidence (34 per cent)
- refreshing knowledge or skills (34 per cent).

Where the learning had been done with current or future work in mind, the main benefits realised[1] were felt to be:

- learning new skills (46 per cent)
- ability to do job better (42 per cent)
- improved work satisfaction (25 per cent)
- changed type of work (seven per cent)
- getting a new job (six per cent)
- getting a pay rise (six per cent).

Those learning with a future job in mind were more likely to say that they had changed to a different type of work or got a new job, than those whose learning was connected with their current job.

This pattern, of learning being perceived to have general and not economic outcomes, is confirmed by the Attitudes to Learning Survey (Campaign for Learning, 1998). Perceptions of how learning will be beneficial, focus on personal development rather than work or career related reasons. Only five per cent of those surveyed thought that learning could lead to an increase in salary, and only ten per cent believed that learning could be useful in improving their job prospects. Learners were more likely than non-learners to recognise the non-material benefits of learning, such as personal satisfaction and increased confidence. They are less likely to recognise more economic benefits such as increased salary levels.

However, there is fairly clear evidence that educational success (even at foundation level) brings financial rewards, and the attainment of qualifications is an important determinant in earning levels. The higher the qualification, the greater likelihood of high wages, although qualifications may just be acting as a proxy for innate ability.

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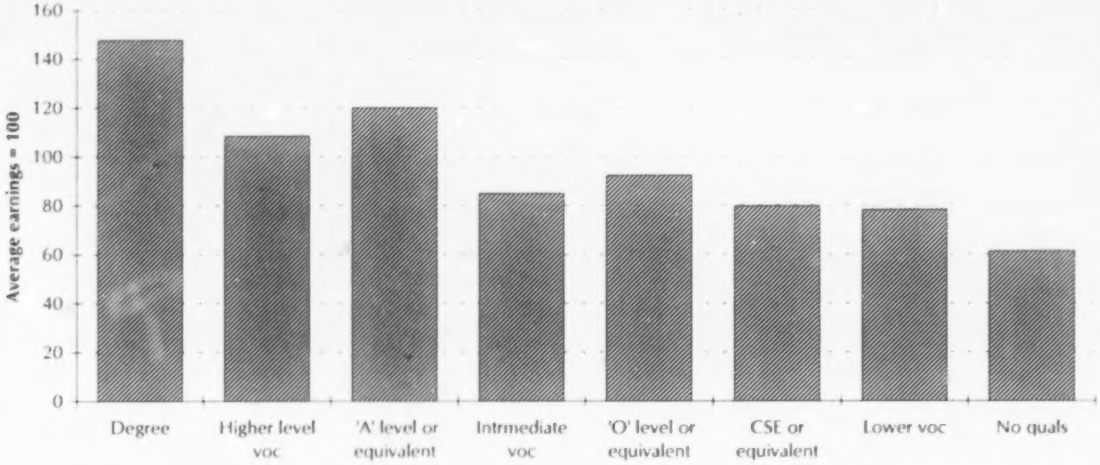
[1] Questions were asked of respondents who had stated that the learning episode was both undertaken with current or future work in mind, and completed by the time of the survey interview.

Figure 7.1: Earnings by qualification (males between the ages of 40-49)



Source: Labour Force Survey, 1999

Figure 7.1 shows the difference in average earnings for men aged between 40 and 49, by the highest formal qualification reached. It shows that:

- men with a degree earn, on average, 60 per cent more than average earnings
- men without any qualification earn 40 per cent less than average earnings
- academic qualifications attract a premium over vocational qualifications (though the differential is falling — see Robinson, 1999).

There is also a very clear link between unemployment and qualifications. The NACETT *Learning Pays* leaflet (NACETT, 1998c) states that unemployment rates for those with level 4 or 5 qualifications are under five per cent (compared with an average almost eight per cent) and over 12 per cent for those without any qualifications at all.

The relationship between training and economic advancement has been closely examined in relatively few studies. Green (1999) points to the difficulties of disentangling cause from effect and the intervention of other variables. However, he argues that:

> *'the strong balance of evidence suggests that experiencing employer-provided training does indeed pay off.'*

He quotes Blundell *et al.* (1996) who looked at a cohort of 23 year olds covered by the National Child Development Study in 1981 who had one or more training courses in the subsequent ten years. Men who received training gained between five and 15 per cent in pay, compared with those who received no training. Women also gained but to a lesser extent.

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7.2 Learning returns for employers

The evidence suggests that employers generally have a positive attitude to training. *Individual Commitment to Learning, Employers' Attitudes* (Metcalf *et al.*, 1994) found that 92 per cent of all employers could see advantages to the organisation of lifetime learning. Only 34 per cent felt that there were any disadvantages. The perception of advantage seemed to be linked to the size of the company, with larger employers believing there to be more advantages. Lifetime learning was felt to increase levels of motivation and productivity, and also to make employees more dynamic and adaptable to change. The main disadvantages that were cited were poor effect on staff retention, raising unrealistic expectations, and distracting employees from their job.

While training for young people is commonly funded by government programmes, training for adults is more likely to be paid for and arranged by employees and employers. Employers therefore perceive certain benefits in offering training. Green (1999) presents the most commonly cited reasons for doing so:

- to raise the skills of employees in the their current jobs
- to produce a multi-skilled workforce
- to engender commitment and enthusiasm for corporate objectives
- to implement change
- to meet health and safety and other external standards
- to prepare employees for promotion, and
- to attract good recruits.

A productivity deficit is believed to stem from a skills and qualification deficit in England. At a European level, NACETT (1998c) cites the example of the gap between workforce qualifications in manufacturing in the UK and Germany. A more highly skilled and qualified workforce in Germany results in greater levels of productivity. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research have also carried out studies which compare the productivity and skills at workplaces in Britain with those at similar workplaces in the rest of Europe. The studies indicate that Britain lacks workers who are sufficiently skilled at the craft and technician level. While lower skill levels may be one reason for lower productivity, other sources of productivity differences also exist. Green (1999) cites the example of one study which found that differences in productivity levels between Britain and America may have more to do with economies of scale than superior skills in American companies. *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1998i) extols the benefits of learning and training for businesses, stating that it 'helps them to be more successful by adding value and keeping them up-to-date.' Learning is purported to help in managing industrial change, and to generate ideas, research and innovation.

There is little concrete evidence from Britain, however, that employers' investment in training produces a financial return. Green (1999) states that there are no formal studies which examine the impact of training on profitability. Some studies do focus on whether the claimed benefits that the workforce receive translate into tangible benefits for the company. However, these studies do not take into account the costs of training and therefore only offer a limited insight.

Much has been done to encourage employers that it is worthwhile investing in training. IiP (Investors in People, see 2.4.4) is one such measure which was introduced to encourage workforce training and development. The evidence suggests that those companies that are accredited as Investors in People can be more successful than those that do not (Tamkin *et al.*, 2000), but that the causality and form of impact are unclear.

7.3 Wider benefits

In addition to benefits such as an improvement in individuals' skills and the ability of enterprises to compete in a global market, other wider benefits of learning are recognised. The NALS results demonstrate that these relate to individuals' quality of life, such as increases in self-esteem and self-confidence. Learning benefits can also relate to the health and social well-being of communities. It is believed that older people who are involved in learning benefit in particular in terms of their own health and well-being.

7.3.1 Older learners

A brief literature review conducted as part of an IES study for the DfEE (Dench and Regan, 2000) found most of the relevant research had been conducted in the US (*eg* Cusack, 1995; Blodgett, 1996; Scheibel, 1995 and Grimley Evans, 1992). However, some UK studies have also focused specifically on older learners. Many of these have concentrated more on motivations to learn than on the impact of learning. They have identified a range of motivations. For example, older students at the Open University emphasised personal development, subject interest, challenge, and the chance to catch up on missed educational opportunities (Percy and Withnall, 1992). Older adults participating in the University of the Third Age (U3A) have cited motivations such as: mental stimulation/intellectual reasons; social reasons (meeting new or like-minded people); interest ('wider horizons', 'meaningful activity', 'interesting range of courses') and lifestyle change (retirement, relocation, bereavement) (Walker, 1998). Older learners are more likely to be looking for personal benefits than younger people, for whom work-related motives are much more important.

Adair and Mowsesian (1993) concluded that learning plays a major role for older adults through creating and maintaining a margin of power. A policy paper published by NIACE (Carlton and Soulsby, 1998) provides qualitative evidence of the impact of informal learning on older people, concluding:

> *'Informal learning is an essential means of access and participation, building confidence and self-esteem and encouraging new directions; older learners consciously acquire new skills useful to their community, whether in paid work, unpaid volunteer or family support roles; older learners value learning as a way of coping with adverse circumstances, social, economic and health-related.'*

The Institute for Employment Studies recently carried out a study which looked specifically at the impact of learning later in life (Dench and Regan, 2000). The survey asked older learners whether learning had made a difference to a number of areas of their life. These included work and voluntary activities and more personal areas of life. Though these findings relate only to older learners, they are likely to provide us with an indication of some of the benefits relating to all age groups. Only two per cent reported that learning had actually worsened their life. Significant proportions of learners reported that learning had improved their self-confidence, their enjoyment of life, how they felt about themselves, and other areas of their life. Of those that were in work, 63 per cent reported that learning had had a positive impact on their job. This is much lower than the proportions that reported an impact in other activities such as social activities and involvement in the local community. The survey also looked at the impact of learning in relation to age (but still concerned with those aged 50 and above), sex and employment status of the learner (see Table 7.1). Though the impact was in the main felt to be positive, some interesting patterns emerged. Generally, women were more likely to report positive impacts of learning than men. Those that were retired were more likely to respond that learning had improved their enjoyment of life. Results from the qualitative work carried out also revealed a range of positive personal impacts. Between one-quarter and one-third reported how learning had improved or extended their knowledge and skills (an improvement in IT skills was a recurrent theme).

A theme running through much of the UK literature on older learners is the positive impact of learning on self-confidence and other measures of quality of life. This is strongly reflected in the findings of the IES study. Furthermore, the impact of learning in later life has been found to be more significant for women than men (Edwards, 1993). Many older women have had fewer opportunities to participate in learning earlier in their life, hence the impact of later participation is enhanced.

In their study of mature women studying in higher education, Cox and Pascall (1994) found that participation provided these women with a new basis for self-evaluation, and *'imparted an*

Table 7.1: Impact of learning, by employment status, age and sex (per cent of the group identified in column heading reporting an improvement/increase in each area of their life)

	Employment status				Age		Sex	
	Employed/ self-employed full time	Employed/ self-employed part time	Retired	Other	50-59	60-70	M	F
Enjoyment of life	46	68	73	65	52	67	50	67
Self-confidence	59	59	47	55	63	47	46	66
How you feel about yourself	43	46	44	58	44	46	34	57
Satisfaction with other areas of life	36	47	51	53	39	49	41	46
Cope better with everyday life	34	33	39	48	34	39	29	44
Ability to stand up and be heard	30	47	30	22	32	33	27	38
Physical well-being	26	42	39	26	27	39	22	44
Willingness to take responsibility	40	38	13	31	38	25	33	32
Involvement in social activities	8	14	18	8	8	16	7	16
Involvement in the local community	6	14	23	20	7	21	6	20
Involvement in voluntary work	13	29	30	15	16	25	11	29
Unweighted base	*116*	*46*	*59*	*21*	*143*	*99*	*113*	*129*
Weighted base	*116*	*43*	*58*	*22*	*137*	*102*	*125*	*115*
Work (employment or self-employment) — *only asked of those in employment/self-employment/on government training programme*	63	62	n/a	n/a	64	57	61	65
Unweighted base	*116*	*46*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*127*	*35*	*83*	*79*
Weighted base	*116*	*43*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*123*	*36*	*91*	*69*

Source: Dench et al., *2000*

almost mystical quality to the search for self-fulfilment'. The experience of education had helped them to make sense of their lives, and provided a means of self-evaluation which helped them to build or rebuild a sense of individuality.

Other studies indicate that outcomes may differ according to gender, school-leaving age and socio-economic status. A study of 102 adult students on 'New Beginnings' courses explored the impact of learning on self-esteem (Hull, 1998). A range of different courses, including people of varying ages, were included. The majority spoke in positive terms of their experiences in adult education. Reported benefits included a significant increase in academic self-esteem, especially for those who left school at the statutory school leaving age and those for whom this was the first experience of adult education. The impact on personal self-esteem was more diverse. Hull concludes:

> *'Differences were apparent in the way males and females registered increased self-esteem. For males, a positive educational experience is more closely linked to an increase in academic self-esteem score; for males experiencing adult education for the first time, the increase is*

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> *particularly high. The female changes in score tend to show a more diffuse relationship, exhibiting changes on a broader horizon. This is of more potential value to the individual in psychological terms, in that the facet of self-esteem which changes most for females, after the academic, is the personal, which has been linked inversely to depression.'*

Many studies illustrate the progressive and interactive impact of learning. The reasons for participating in learning change over time, or are rationalised depending on the experience of learning. In her study of mature women, Edwards (1993) found that women initially reported instrumental reasons for taking a degree, for example, to increase their standard of living. However, during the process of studying, education in itself became more important. West (1995), in a study of 30 learners over three years, found that the experience of adult education provided a new coherence to their previously fragmented lives.

The impact of learning is not always in the direction sought or expected. For example, Iphofen (1996) conducted a study amongst people with working class backgrounds attending adult residential colleges. The founders of these colleges had aimed to increase political activism within this group. However, Iphofen found a decrease in such activism, alongside upward mobility and increased identification with the middle classes. These outcomes were related to social class and the initial motivations for participation: those ranked lower on the socio-economic scale reported instrumental reasons for studying, such as the desire to get ahead. Those higher on the scale more frequently mentioned intellectual reasons and personal enrichment.

A few studies have examined the impact of learning on health and well being. One evaluated the impact of a scheme in England where an adult education worker was attached to local health practices, and patients were referred to her by doctors and other medical workers (McGivney, 1997). The study found that over half those who engaged in learning as a result of an interview with the guidance worker reported psychological benefits such as increased confidence, greater motivation and a reduced sense of isolation, as well as a lessening of depression and decreased preoccupation with pain or ill health. Some also reported a general widening of horizons and aspirations, and in several cases, the opportunity to attend a programme of study had led to a change of life direction and greater contentment and fulfilment. All respondents to the evaluation found talking to the guidance worker helpful, regardless of whether they acted on the information and advice given. Simply taking part in a guidance interview and being listened to was found enormously beneficial.

7.4 Evaluations of training initiatives

The Department for Education and Employment has commissioned research to evaluate the main training programmes which have been developed and implemented for adults. The findings from the main programmes are presented below. Also included are general initiatives designed to promote adult learning. (The content of most of these programmes and initiatives was described earlier in the report.)

- **Training for Work** (this was replaced by Work Based Training (now Learning) for Adults in 1998). Participation in the programme was found to increase the chances of obtaining employment, compared to those that had not taken part (Payne, *et al.*, 1999). The benefits were particularly evident where people moved straight from the training programme into employment. It was also found, however, that even those that returned to unemployment after TfW were more likely to find a job than non-participants. TfW did not greatly affect hourly wage rates, but those that had been on the programme were more likely to secure full-time employment.

- **learndirect.** The vast majority of callers thought that the quality of the service was good and advisers were considered helpful and understanding (Bysshe and Parsons, 1999). Three out of four callers used the information that they received from **learndirect** in some way and over half of the callers that had been unemployed at the time of the enquiry believed that the information they had received had affected their change in activity.

- **Union Learning Fund.** The evaluation of the early stage of the ULF found it to be a success with some projects exceeding expectations (Shaw, 1999). Nearly three times the number of union officials than originally planned received training to be a Learning Representative. Where problems have been experienced it is generally where unions lack experience in managing projects or learning activities. The evaluation found that unions can contribute to lifelong learning, and individuals express a desire for training that would not otherwise have been available. Through the ULF 20 learning centres have been developed or enhanced and over 2,000 people have received training.

- **Individual Learning Accounts.** The evaluation focuses on the 12 development projects run by TECs in 1998-99 to explore a range of features of ILA models (SWA, 1999). Participation of partners was found to be vital in accessing groups that may not otherwise take up the opportunity. Use of a single ILA model was found to be preferable to multi-faceted approaches, and it was found to be important to make access as easy as possible, *ie* not to restrict the opening of an account to a particular financial institution, and to avoid making applicants visit several places to open an account. The initial contribution of £25 was achieved, but the concept of 'saving to learn' was not yet fully embedded.

- **Employee Development Schemes.** Employee Development Schemes aim to provide opportunities for learning which are wider than those required by the employer, and also to provide support from the employer, often in the form of a cash entitlement to spend on learning activities. The concept was launched in 1989. The evaluation found that for those with limited finances, an EDS offered a unique opportunity to become involved in learning. The majority of those taking part believed that they had benefited personally. Sixty-four per cent of participants reported that EDS had given them greater confidence in their ability to learn and forty per cent felt that EDS had made them more willing to learn. A good scheme increases motivation and commitment to learning. Though it was felt that some employers would be discouraged by the cost of implementing an EDS, the benefits to employers can be wide ranging (Parsons, *et al.*, 1998; Firth and Goffey, 1997).

- **Pre-vocational Pilots.** Pre-vocational pilots aimed to help people with multiple disadvantages in the labour market to access training and support that would enable them to benefit from mainstream training programmes. The pilots were found to be successful in attracting those individuals that were on the margins of the labour market. Thirty-two per cent of respondents had been in work since leaving PVP and 30 per cent had progressed onto Training for Work following PVP. They were also more likely to gain employment if they had been unemployed for a shorter time prior to participation on PVP. Respondents were more likely to say that PVP had helped their confidence and motivation rather than their chances of getting a job, and there remain a minority that were despondent about their employment prospects and were fairly cynical about the scheme.

8. Authors' Conclusions

There is a long tradition of adult learning in England supported by public, private and voluntary sector resources.

The balance of the evidence presented in Chapter 2 suggests that adult participation in learning activities is rising — although the trend is not a clear one, as there is not a consistent source of data taking a comprehensive view of adult learning over time.

Despite the apparent increase in learning activity, there remains a significant group of non-learners. They are important in both numerical and policy terms, as they tend to be people with the least purchase on the labour market and in greatest danger of unemployment or unsatisfactory employment. Younger people, those with high levels of initial education, those in work, especially in higher level occupations, are far more likely to be engaged in learning than older people, those who leave school early, and people in lower-skilled manual jobs. There appears to be a virtuous circle, or perhaps more worryingly a vicious circle, at work. Those engaged in learning activities when they are young, tend to develop a learning habit which they return to throughout their lives. Those switched off learning when young, tend not to be switched back on in later life.

Over the last ten to 20 years there has been a growing acceptance in policy circles of the importance of adult learning to the economy, although hard economic evidence of the beneficial impact is still not widely available.

Policy interest initially led to a greater emphasis on the need for continuing training opportunities at work. The main policy levers were then, and continue to be, exhortation and example, rather than any form of compulsion or incentive. While this approach may be seen to work at the margins, as more employers for example adopt the Investors in People standard, it may not address the underlying problem of the lack of demand for skills in many employing organisations.

The major reform of the post-school education and training system undertaken in 1992 led to an opening up of opportunities to previously excluded groups, in ways not entirely foreseen by its authors. The new government, elected in May 1997, willingly accepted this movement towards social inclusion and lent it support. Further impetus was given to the already discernible shift away from demand-led market-driven provision towards notions of assessing need and stimulating demand.

Since May 1997 there has been an acknowledgement by government of the importance of social inclusion, civic and public life, and personal development and fulfilment as legitimate goals for education worthy of public support. A 'learning society' is now seen as a desirable social and well as economic goal. The *Learning Age* consultation paper (DfEE, 1998i) issued by the government in 1998 is seen by some commentators as a watershed in policy terms and led to a new policy framework, as set out in Chapter 2, and largely embodied in the Learning and Skills Bill presented to Parliament at the end of 1999.

Key elements of current policy include:

- efforts to maximise attainment, particularly in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, during initial education — with the long-term aim of minimising alienation from learning in later life
- an emphasis on basic skills training for adults (especially since the publication of the Moser report [DfEE, 1999a])
- an inclusive approach to learning with an explicit aim of widening participation in both further and higher education
- a commitment to develop new forms of learning provision, using modern technologies to improve the efficiency of developing learning materials, overcome problems of access, and make learning available in more digestible units, as epitomised by the University for Industry (Ufi)
- engaging a wider range of intermediaries to support learning activities and participation, *eg* with government support for community learning activities and the involvement of trade unions
- a willingness to acknowledge and meet the additional costs to providers of attracting, recruiting and retaining non-traditional learners.

Any policy changes will take time to take effect — intentional or unintentional. The next decade will be the test both of government intentions and the efficacy of its proposed solutions. The proposals have been welcomed by almost all those engaged in the education and training of adults.

However, this review suggests that there will remain a number of challenges, including:

- raising the demand for learning among those who need it most, but are interested in it least — linked to the level of demand for skills amongst employers and the effective use of the mass media. For example, basic skill deficiencies among the adult population are a major issue. However, many people without basic skills, who are in work, work for employers who are unwilling to take responsibility for providing basic skill training. The individuals themselves generally lack confidence and seldom seek out support on their own initiative. Their problem may go untackled until they fall out of the labour market, as skill changes generate employment restructuring with which they cannot cope.

- encouraging a culture of continuous learning and development at all levels, in particular to overcome the intermediate-level skills deficit, which is where the need is most pressing. Similarly, there are a range of semi-skilled and skilled people who need to develop a thirst for retraining and development to keep abreast of changing skill requirements, yet lack either the personal motivation or an employer-led imperative so to do.

- ensuring that new initiatives aimed at widening participation *eg* Ufi, Local Learning Centres, Individual Learning Accounts focus on those in need. One interpretation of the history of past policy initiatives to break down barriers to learning is that they have largely benefited existing learners rather than attracting new groups. The additionality in terms of widening participation has been minimal as, for example, young people and/or people from middle class backgrounds have 'colonised' provision aimed at adults or groups from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

- ensuring that a concentration on qualifications (only as a proxy for standards) does not distort funding and provision to the detriment of initially reluctant learners. There are growing suggestions that many people want to participate in small amounts of learning, which may or may not lend themselves to certification. Employers too, while acknowledging the value of qualifications in making recruitment and selection decisions, tend to place more emphasis on work and learning experience. However, government in particular has tended to construct funding systems based on qualifications as outputs. In the past this has tend to distort provision by placing an emphasis on achieving a level of certification unwanted by the learner, and may have served as a deterrent rather than an incentive to learn.

- maintaining the government's stated commitment to social inclusion and the wider purposes of learning in the face of institutional inertia and conservatism. Our review noted in Chapter 4 that while further education colleges were beginning to ensure that their specialist staff were starting to acquire the skills necessary to deal with a wider clientele, this was not the case among all teaching staff. This is likely also to be the case among private sector training providers. Furthermore, other evidence suggests that colleges are slow to take up opportunities offered through new information and communication technologies and that computer literacy is surprisingly low. Providers will have to learn to adapt to the new forms and nature of demand if they are not act as a deadweight on the push to widen participation in learning.

- ensuring that the lifelong learning agenda does not concentrate disproportionately on 16 to 19 year olds, but includes people of all ages, including the growing numbers of those aged over 60. This involves not only appreciating the importance of improving the skills of those in or seeking work, but also that there are wider, non-work related benefits to learning, which all people should have the opportunity to enjoy.

Glossary

ABCC	Association of British Correspondence Colleges	The Association representing the major private correspondence colleges in the UK
AEEU	Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union	The union for engineers and electricians
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning	Used as an alternative to formal qualifications to assess a student's suitability to enter formal education
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	A worldwide public-sector television and radio broadcaster with a significant education output
BECTa	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency	The Government's lead agency for Information and Communications Technology in education, bearing responsible for developing the National Grid for Learning
BSA	Basic Skills Agency	The national development agency for literacy, numeracy and related basic skills in England and Wales
CCTE	Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise	Local employer body created by a merger between the local TEC and the local Chamber of Commerce
CDL	Career Development Loan	Government initiative to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their careers by giving them initial financial help to pay for vocational training
CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute	A leading provider of vocational qualifications in the UK
DES	Department for Education and Science	Government Department responsible for education and science which became the Department for Education (DfE) before merging with the ED in 1995 to become the DfEE
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment	Government Department for education and employment. Formed in 1995 by the merger of the DfE and ED
ED	Employment Department	Government Department responsible for education which merged with the DfE in 1995 to become the DfEE
EDS	Employee Development Scheme	Scheme to provide opportunities for learning which are wider than those required by the employer, often in the form of a cash entitlement
ENTO	Employment Training Organisation	The national training organisation for people involved in the development, management, health and safety and representation of people in the workplace

ES	Employment Service	An agency of the DfEE responsible for helping unemployed people find work and, in particular, managing the New Deal range of policies for the unemployed and other groups experiencing difficulties entering the labour market, which includes provision of education and training opportunities
ESF	European Social Fund	One of the four European Structural funds, created in order to combat structural unemployment in Europe
FE	Further Education	Further education is education and training, both academic and vocational, which takes place after the school-leaving age of 16, with no upper age limit
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency	The national development agency for further education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council	The national funding agency for further education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation	The national training organisation for the further education sector
Ford EDAP	Ford Employee Development and Assistance Programme	Ford Motor Company's Employee Development Scheme
GCE 'A' level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level	Single subject examinations usually taken at age 18 following two years of study
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	A single subject examination normally taken in a range of subjects (normally between five and eight) usually at age 16, and intended to be the main method of assessment at this age, under the National Curriculum assessment arrangements
GMB	General Municipal Boiler Makers Union	
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification	A broad vocational qualification related to a particular industry or sector of the economy. Open to students of any age, they are intended to offer a comprehensive preparation for employment, as well as a route to higher level qualifications.
HE	Higher Education	Higher Education includes degree courses, postgraduate courses and Higher National Diplomas. HE takes place in universities, higher education colleges, some further education colleges, and is open to students of any age.
HEA	Health Education Authority	England's lead body in health promotion
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England	The national funding agency for higher education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions	A university, higher education college, or further education college offering higher education courses
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency	The agency responsible for collecting, analysing and reporting on HE statistics for universities and colleges in the UK
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	see also IT

IES	Institute for Employment Studies	An independent centre of research and consultancy in employment policy and human resource issues
ILA	Individual Learning Account	A facility to encourage individuals to invest more money to pay for their own learning
IPD	Institute of Personnel and Development	The professional institute for those specialising in the management and development of people
IT	Information Technology	see also ICT
ITC	Independent Television Commission	Independent public body responsible for licensing and regulating commercially funded television in the UK
ITV		Federation of regional broadcasters achieving national coverage by 15 licensees, broadcasting in 14 regional areas
LEA	Local Education Authority	A locally elected county, metropolitan district or borough council within England and Wales with a statutory duty for the provision of public education services in its area
LFS	Labour Force Survey	National survey of individuals asking questions about their involvement with education, training and the labour market. Currently conducted once a quarter with plans to be extended to monthly
NACETT	National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets	The government's principal advisory body of Education and Training Targets
NAGCELL	National Advisory Group on Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning	Group made up of leading figures from the media, business, trade unions, local authorities, the voluntary sector and adult, further and higher education to advise the Secretary of State and Ministers on matters relating to adult and lifelong learning
NALS	National Adult Learning Survey	The most comprehensive national survey of adult learning that has been undertaken in England and Wales, published in 1997 to be updated in 2000
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications	Until 1997, NCVQ held responsibility for the overall framework Edexcel Foundation (BTEC), City & Guilds and RSA Examination boards. Now merged with the Schools Curriculum Assessment Authority to become the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) it is responsible for developing the National Curriculum, designing and implementing assessment arrangements and overseeing both academic and vocational qualifications in England
NEC	National Extension College	Non-profit-making trust and fully accredited distance learning college
NFWI	National Federation of Women's Institutes	The largest women's national charity in England
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education	The national organisation for adult learning
NOCN	National Open College Network	One of the largest awarding bodies in the UK, offering awards to adult learners and, in particular, to those people for whom more traditional qualifications are inaccessible or inappropriate
NSTF	National Skills Task	Created in 1998 to assist the Secretary of State in developing a

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	Force	National Skills Agenda
NTO	National Training Organisation	The nationally recognised voice of employers in each sector, working with government and partners to develop education and training to equip young people and employees with the skills and competence employers need
NVQ/SVQ	National Vocational Qualification/ Scottish Vocational Qualification	Job-specific vocational qualifications aimed largely at people who have already left full-time education
OU	Open University	Britains largest single teaching institution and the only university in the UK established to teach its students through supported open learning
PAOLO		The national training organisation for community based learning and development
PAT	Policy Action Teams	18 PATS were created following the publication of the Social Exclusion Unit's report *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, to examine different aspects of deprivation and to make recommendations for long-term action to turn disadvantaged communities around
PVP	Pre-Vocational Pilots	Aimed at helping people with multiple disadvantages in the labour market to access training and support, enabling them to benefit from mainstream training programmes
RDA	Regional Development Agency	Government agencies operational from 1998 with the purpose of co-ordinating regional economic development and regeneration
RSA	The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce	A registered charity working to create a civilised society based on a sustainable economy. Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) develops and provides a range of flexible qualifications
TEC	Training and Enterprise Councils	Independent companies set up throughout England and Wales to organise training at a local level
TUC	Trades Union Congress	A confederation of trade unions with most labour organisations affiliated to it
U3A	University of the Third Age	An organisation which aims to provide educational stimulus and support for older people. A learning co-operative of older people.
Ufi	University for Industry	A public-private partnership aimed to boost the competitiveness of business and the employability of individuals. Using modern technologies, learning will be made available at a time and place to suit the learner: at home, in the workplace and through a national network of **learndirect** centres.
ULF	Union Learning Fund	A fund to support trade unions to do innovative work helping to promote, provide and embed lifelong learning in the workplace
UNISON		The union for local government employees
WBLA	Work Based Learning for Adults	A programme for adults (25+) unemployed for over six months to provide them with the skills they need to get a job; previously called Work Based Training for Adults
WEA	Worker's Educational Association	The largest national voluntary provider of adult education in the UK

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www.basic-skills.co.uk	Basic Skills Agency
www.bbc.co.uk/education	BBC Education
www.becta.org.uk	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk	Campaign for Learning
www.detr.gov.uk	Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
www.dfee.gov.uk	Department for Education and Employment
www.eurydice.org/Eurybase	Eurybase
www.feda.ac.uk	Further Education Development Agency
www.fefc.ac.uk	Further Education Funding Council
www.hecfe.ac.uk	Higher Education Funding Council for England
www.hesa.ac.uk	Higher Education Statistics Agency
www.itc.co.uk	Independent Television Commission
www.ipd.co.uk	Institute of Personnel and Development
www.lga.gov.uk	Local Government Association
www.lifelonglearning.dfee.gov.uk	UK Lifelong Learning (DfEE)
www.nec.ac.uk	National Extension College
www.nfwi.org.uk	National Federation of Women's Institutes
www.ngfl.gov.uk	National Grid for Learning
www.niace.org.uk	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
www.nocn.ac.uk	National Open College Network
www.open.ac.uk	Open University
www.tec.co.uk	Training and Enterprise Councils
www.tuc.org.uk	Trades Union Congress
www.wea.org.uk	Workers Educational Association

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Appendix: Additional Data

	The Learning Divide 1996 (NIACE)	National Adult Learning Survey 1997	Attitudes to Learning '98: MORI state of the Nation survey
General participation	23 per cent currently learning 17 per cent engaged in learning activity during last three years 40 per cent had undertaken learning during last three years	76 per cent had undertaken learning during last three years	47 per cent had participated in taught learning during the last 12 months 56 per cent had participated in non-taught learning during the last 12 months
By gender	25 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women currently learning 25 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women have engaged in past learning over three years ago 50 per cent of men and 42 per cent of women had undertaken learning during the last three years 31 per cent of men and 41 per cent of women have done no learning since completing full-time education	78 per cent of men and 70 per cent of women had undertaken learning during the last three years (excludes those still in full-time education)	
By age	Percentage of age groups participating in current or recent learning: 86 per cent of 17-19s 65 per cent of 20-24s 48 per cent of 25-34s 43 per cent of 35-44s 36 per cent of 45-54s 25 per cent of 55-64s 19 per cent of 65-74s Only 15 per cent of 75+s	Percentage of age groups participating in current or recent learning: 82 per cent of 16-19s 85 per cent of 20-29s 82 per cent of 30-39s 78 per cent of 40-49s 67 per cent of 50-59s 47 per cent of 60-69s	Older people are less likely to participate in learning 92 per cent of young people think learning is something they do every day of their life Older age groups are less likely to think that learning is personally important

	The Learning Divide 1996 (NIACE)	**National Adult Learning Survey 1997**	**Attitudes to Learning '98: MORI state of the Nation survey**
By terminal age of education	'The best single predictor of adult learning continues to be the length of initial education.' Percentage participating in current or recent study: 20 per cent of those leaving school at 16 or earlier 39 per cent of those leaving at 16 or 17 59 per cent of those leaving at 18+	Percentage participating in current or recent study: 64 per cent of those leaving full time education at 16 or earlier 84 per cent of those leaving at 17 or 18 86 per cent of those leaving at 19 or 20 93 per cent of those leaving at 21+	'Adults educated to 'A' level or degree are more likely to participate in taught learning. They are also more likely to want to take part in learning in the next year.'
By employment status	'It is those working full-time who are most engaged in current or recent learning.' Percentage of those participating in current or recent learning: 49 per cent of full-time workers 42 per cent of part-time workers 40 per cent of unemployed people 23 per cent of those not working 20 per cent of retired people	Percentage of those participating in current or recent learning: 85 per cent of those in paid work 72 per cent of unemployed people 47 per cent of those looking after home and family 43 per cent of retired people 41 per cent of those with long-term sickness	'Unemployed people are most likely to cite the influence of parents and relatives as the people who influence them to start learning.'
By social class and/or occupation	Percentage of those participating in current or recent learning: 53 per cent of upper and middle class (AB) 52 per cent of lower middle class (C1) 33 per cent of skilled working class(C2) 26 per cent of unskilled working class and those on limited incomes (DE)	Percentage of those participating in current or recent learning: 90 per cent of professional/managerial workers 86 per cent of other non-manual workers 70 per cent of skilled manual workers 69 per cent of semi-skilled manual workers 50 per cent of unskilled manual workers	'Those from social class DE households are less likely to feel that learning is important and are also less likely to regard learning as enjoyable.'

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	The Learning Divide 1996 (NIACE)	National Adult Learning Survey 1997	Attitudes to Learning '98: MORI state of the Nation survey
By qualification on leaving full-time education		Percentage of those participating in current or recent learning: 84 per cent of those with an academic or vocational qualification 53 per cent of those with no academic or vocational qualification	'Adults with no qualifications are less likely to feel that learning is personally important and are also less likely to regard learning as enjoyable.' 'Friends are the most likely to influence people without qualifications to start learning.' '37 per cent of adults say that the stress laid on qualifications has put them off learning.'
Attitudes to learning	93 per cent think that learning is something people do throughout their lives 74 per cent were confident about learning new skills	92 per cent agreed that learning is interesting and that learning about new things is enjoyable 50 per cent of non-learners said that nothing would encourage them to learn	90 per cent of people think learning is personally important 49 per cent think they will take part in taught learning and 60 per cent think they will take part in non-taught learning in the next 12 months
Future learning	Likelihood of future learning: 20 per cent very likely 18 per cent fairly likely 9 per cent fairly unlikely 46 per cent very unlikely 7 per cent don't know	Likelihood of future job-related learning: 33 per cent very likely 21 per cent fairly likely 19 per cent not very likely 26 per cent not at all likely 1 per cent unclear Likelihood of future non-job-related training: 15 per cent very likely 23 per cent fairly likely 33 per cent not very likely 28 per cent not at all likely 1 per cent unclear	Likelihood of future taught learning: 24 per cent very likely 25 per cent fairly likely 26 per cent not very likely 23 per cent not at all likely 2 per cent don't know Likelihood of future non-taught learning: 27 per cent very likely 33 per cent fairly likely 21 per cent not very likely 17 per cent not at all likely 3 per cent don't know

Table A2.1: Importance of reasons for participating in learning: row per cent within each age group

	Under 60				60 and over			
	Very	Fairly	Not	*Weighted base*	Very	Fairly	Not	*Weighted base*
INSTRUMENTAL								
My employer/manager told me to do the training/learning	29	16	54	*125*	10	7	83	*89*
Needed qualifications/skills to help me change job	29	15	57	*122*	5	9	86	*85*
I want to be able to help my family	25	26	50	*121*	21	16	63	*86*
Learning helps me/is part of voluntary work I already do	11	18	71	*116*	14	18	68	*88*
I wanted to take part in voluntary work	9	14	78	*118*	12	24	63	*90*
I wanted to get more involved in my local community	4	14	82	*119*	11	25	64	*89*
INTELLECTUAL								
I wanted to generally increase my knowledge	68	19	12	*129*	61	25	14	*93*
I wanted to keep my brain active	50	26	24	*123*	74	14	12	*91*
I enjoy the challenge of learning new things	66	21	19	*126*	56	29	15	*93*
I wanted to learn about something I had always been interested in	54	27	20	*129*	61	17	22	*93*
Learning is fun	37	33	30	*124*	46	30	24	*90*
I wanted to develop new interests	41	30	29	*123*	39	32	29	*92*
SOCIAL								
I wanted to meet people with interests like mine	16	26	58	*124*	32	21	47	*86*
I wanted to meet new people	18	27	55	*122*	21	26	54	*89*
I wanted to meet people in similar circumstances to me	18	20	63	*122*	15	27	58	*85*
PERSONAL								
I wanted to gain qualifications for personal satisfaction	40	13	47	*125*	18	22	60	*90*
I wanted to keep my body active	24	21	55	*121*	36	22	42	*86*
I needed to do something with my time	23	15	62	*119*	33	17	51	*89*
I wanted to take my life in different directions	21	22	57	*122*	22	16	62	*87*
To help me deal with problems in my life	14	21	65	*118*	21	15	64	*85*
OTHER								
Some interesting/relevant courses were set up locally	11	21	68	*118*	17	17	66	*87*
A relative/friend suggested I go	4	8	88	*116*	7	10	83	*83*

Source: Learning in Later Life: Motivation and Impact, Dench et al., *DfEE, 2000*

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Adult Learning in England: a review

J Hillage, T Uden, F Aldridge, J Eccles

Lifelong learning is a key element of public and corporate employment policy and is beginning to focus on some of the main concerns identified from a growing body of research, such as how to widen participation. This review of adult learning policy and provision in England as at the end of the 20th century, summarises the state of adult learning in terms of the institutional arrangements and policies, the extent of participation and factors influencing funding, the main issues facing policy makers and the policies they have adopted and that are planned. It was prepared as a Background Report for the OECD's review of adult learning in a range of industrialised countries.

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ISBN 1-85184-299-3
9 781851 842995

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